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RAVENSNEST

OR,

THE REDSKINS.

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AL

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE PILOT," "THE PATHFINDER," "DEERSLAYER,"
"TWO ADMIRALS," &c.

In every work regard the writer's end;
None e'er can compass more than they intend.
POPE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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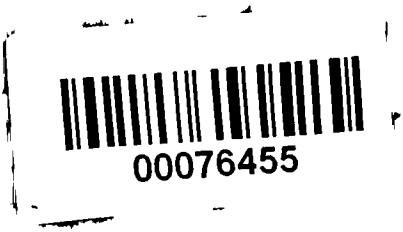

PREFACE.

THIS book closes the series of the Littlepage Manuscripts, which have been given to the world, as containing a fair account of the comparative sacrifices of time, money and labour, made respectively by the landlord and the tenants, on a New York estate; together with the manner in which usages and opinions are changing among us; as well as certain of the reasons of these changes. The discriminating reader will probably be able to trace in these narratives the progress of those innovations on the great laws of morals which are becoming so very manifest in connexion with this interest, setting at naught the plainest principles that God has transmitted to man for the government of his conduct, and all under the extraordinary pretence of favouring liberty! In this downward course, our picture embraces some of the proofs of that looseness of views on the subject of certain species of property which is, in a degree, perhaps, inseparable from the semi-barbarous condition of a new settlement; the gradation of the squatter, from him who merely makes his pitch to crop a few fields in passing, to him who carries on the business by

wholesale; and last, though not least in this catalogue of marauders, the anti-renter.

It would be idle to deny that the great principle which lies at the bottom of anti-rentism, if principle it can be called, is the assumption of a claim that the interests and wishes of numbers are to be respected, though done at a sacrifice of the clearest rights of the few. That this is not liberty, but tyranny in its worst form, every right-thinking and right-feeling man must be fully aware. Every one who knows much of the history of the past, and of the influence of classes, must understand, that whenever the educated, the affluent, and the practised, choose to unite their means of combination and money to control the political destiny of a country, they become irresistible; making the most subservient tools of those very masses who vainly imagine *they* are the true guardians of their own liberties. The well-known election of 1840 is a memorable instance of the power of such a combination; though that was a combination formed mostly for the mere purposes of faction, sustained perhaps by the desperate designs of the insolvents of the country. Such a combination was necessarily wanting in union among the affluent; it had not the high support of principles to give it sanctity, and it affords little more than the proof of the power of money and leisure, when applied in a very doubtful cause, in wielding the masses of a great nation, to be the instruments of their own subjection. No well-intentioned American legislator, consequently, ought ever to lose sight of the fact, that

each invasion of the right which he sanctions is a blow struck against liberty itself, which, in a country like this, has no auxiliary so certain or so powerful as justice.

The State of New York contains about 43,000 square miles of land; or something like 27,000,000 of acres. In 1783, its population must have been about 200,000 souls. With such a proportion between people and surface it is unnecessary to prove that the husbandman was not quite as dependent on the landholder, as the landholder was dependent on the husbandman. This would have been true, had the State been an island; but we all know that it was surrounded by many communities similarly situated, and that nothing else was so abundant as land! All notions of exactions and monopolies, therefore, must be untrue, as applied to those two interests at that day.

In 1786-7, the State of New York, then in possession of all powers on the subject, abolished entails, and otherwise brought its law of real estate in harmony with the institutions. At that time, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the leases which have since become so obnoxious, were in existence. With the attention of the State drawn directly to the main subject, no one saw anything incompatible with the institutions in them. *It was felt that the landlords had bought the tenants to occupy their lands by the liberality of their concessions*, and that the latter were the obliged parties. Had the landlords of that day endeavoured to lease for one year, or for ten years, no tenants could have been found for wild lands; but it became a different thing, when the owner of the soil agreed

to part with it for ever, in consideration of a very low rent, granting six or eight years free from any charge whatever, and consenting to receive the product of the soil itself in lieu of money. Then, indeed, men were not only willing to come into the terms, but eager; the best evidence of which is the fact, that the same tenants might have bought land, out and out, in every direction around them, had they not preferred the easier terms of the leases. Now, that these same men, or their successors, have become rich enough to care more to be rid of the incumbrance of the rent than to keep their money, the rights of the parties certainly are not altered.

In 1789, the Constitution of the United States came into operation; New York being a party to its creation and conditions. By that Constitution, the State deliberately deprived itself of the power to touch the covenants of these leases, without conceding the power to any other government; unless it might be through a change of the Constitution itself. As a necessary consequence, these leases, in a legal sense, belong to the institutions of New York, instead of being opposed to them. Not only is the spirit of the institutions in harmony with these leases, but so is the letter also. Men must draw a distinction between the "spirit of the institutions" and their own "spirits;" the latter being often nothing more than a stomach that is not easily satisfied. It would be just as true to affirm that domestic slavery is opposed to the institutions of the United States, as to say the same of these leases. It would be just as rational to maintain,

because A. does not choose to make an associate of B., that he is acting in opposition to the "spirit of the institutions," inasmuch as the Declaration of Independence advances the dogma that men are born equal, as it is to say it is opposed to the same spirit, for B. to pay rent to A. according to his covenant.

It is pretended that the durable leases are feudal in their nature. We do not conceive this to be true; but, admitting it be so, it would only prove that feudality, to this extent, is a part of the institutions of the State. What is more, it would become a part over which the State itself has conceded all power of control, beyond that which it may remotely possess as one out of twenty-eight communities. As respects this feudal feature, it is not easy to say where it must be looked for. It is not to be found in the simple fact of paying rent, for that is so general as to render the whole country feudal, could it be true; it cannot be in the circumstance that the rent is to be paid "in kind," as it is called, and in labour, for that is an advantage to the tenant, by affording him the option, since the penalty of a failure leaves the alternative of paying in money. It must be, therefore, that these leases are feudal because they run for ever! Now the length of the lease is clearly a concession to the tenant, and was so regarded when received; and there is not probably a single tenant, under lives, who would not gladly exchange his term of possession for that of one of these detestable durable leases!

Among the absurdities that have been circulated on

this subject of feudality, it has been pretended that the well-known English statute of "*quia emptores*" has prohibited fines for alienation; or that the quarter-sales, fifth-sales, sixth-sales, &c. of our own leases were contrary to the law of the realm, when made. Under the common law, in certain cases of feudal tenures, the fines for alienation were an incident of the tenure. The statute of *quia emptores* abolished that general principle, but it in no manner forbade parties *to enter into covenants of the nature of quarter-sales*, did they see fit. The common law gives all the real estate to the eldest son. Our statute divides the real estate among the nearest of kin, without regard even to sex. It might just as well be pretended that the father cannot devise all his lands to his eldest son, under our statute, as to say that the law of Edward I. prevents parties from *bargaining* for quarter-sales. Altering a provision of the common law does not preclude parties from making covenants similar to its ancient provisions.

Feudal tenures were originally divided into two great classes; those which were called the military tenure, or knight's service, and *soccage*. The first tenure was that which became oppressive in the progress of society. Soccage was of two kinds; free and villain. The first has an affinity to our own system, as connected with these leases; the last never existed among us at all. When the knight's service, or military tenures of England were converted into free soccage, in the reign of Charles II., the concession was considered of a character so favour-

able to liberty as to be classed among the great measures of the time; one of which was the *Habeas Corpus* Act!

The only feature of our own leases, in the least approaching "villain soccage," is that of the "day's works." But every one acquainted with the habits of American life, will understand that husbandmen, in general, throughout the northern States, would regard it as an advantage to be able to pay their debts in this way; and the law gives them an option, since a failure to pay "in kind," or in "work," merely incurs the forfeiture of paying what the particular thing is worth in money. In point of fact, money has always been received for these "days' works," and at a stipulated price.

But, it is pretended, whatever may be the equity of these leasehold contracts, that they are offensive to the tenants, and ought to be abrogated for the peace of the State. The State is bound to make all classes of men respect its laws, and in nothing more so than in the fulfilment of their legal contracts. The greater the number of the offenders, the higher the obligation to act with decision and efficiency. To say that these disorganizers *ought* not to be put down, is to say that crime is to obtain impunity by its own extent; and to say that they *cannot* be put down "under our form of government," is a direct admission that the government is unequal to the discharge of one of the plainest and commonest obligations of all civilized society. If this be really so, the sooner we get rid of the present form of government the better.

The notion of remedying *such* an evil by concession, is as puerile as it is dishonest. The larger the concessions become, the greater will be the exactions of a cormorant cupidity. As soon as quiet is obtained by these means, in reference to the leasehold tenures, it will be demanded by some fresh combination to attain some other end.

When Lee told Washington, at Monmouth, "Sir, your troops will not stand against British grenadiers," Washington is said to have answered, "Sir, you have never tried them." The same reply might be given to those miserable traducers of this Republic, who, in order to obtain votes, affect to think there is not sufficient energy in its Government to put down so barefaced an attempt as this of the anti-renters to alter the conditions of their own leases to suit their own convenience. The county of Delaware has, of itself, nobly given the lie to the assertion, the honest portion of its inhabitants scattering the knaves to the four winds, the moment there was a fair occasion made for them to act. A single, energetic proclamation from Albany, calling "a spade a spade," and not affecting to gloss over the disguised robbery of these anti-renters, and laying just principles fairly before the public mind, would of itself have crushed the evil in its germ. The people of New York, in their general capacity, are not the knaves their servants evidently suppose.

The Assembly of New York, in its memorable session of 1846, has taxed the rents on long leases; thus, not only taxing the same property twice, but imposing the worst sort of income-tax, or one aimed at a few indivi-

duals. It has "thimble-rigged" in its legislation, as Mr. Hugh Littlepage not unaptly terms it; endeavouring to do that indirectly, which the Constitution will not permit it to do directly. In other words, as it can pass no direct law "impairing the obligation of contracts," while it *can* regulate descents, it has enacted, so far as one body of the legislature has power to enact anything, that on the *death* of a landlord the tenant may convert his lease into a mortgage, on discharging which he shall hold his land in fee!

We deem the first of these measures far more tyrannical than the attempt of Great Britain to tax her Colonies, which brought about the Revolution. It is of the same general character—that of unjust taxation; while it is attended by circumstances of aggravation that were altogether wanting in the policy of the mother country. This is not a tax for revenue, which is not needed; but a tax to "choke off" the landlords, to use a common American phrase. It is clearly taxing *nothing*, or it is taxing the same property twice. It is done to conciliate three or four thousand voters, who are now in the market, at the expense of three or four hundred who, it is known, are not to be bought. It is unjust in its motives, its means, and its end. The measure is discreditable to civilization, and an outrage on liberty.

But, the other law mentioned is an atrocity so grave, as to alarm every man of common principle in the State, were it not so feeble in its devices to cheat the Constitution, as to excite contempt. This extraordinary power

is exercised because the legislature *can* control the law of descents, though it cannot "impair the obligation of contracts!" Had the law said at once that on the death of a landlord each of his tenants should *own* his farm in fee, the *ensemble* of the fraud would have been preserved, since the "law of descents" would have been so far regulated as to substitute one heir for another: but changing the *nature* of a contract, with a party who has nothing to do with the succession at all, is not so very clearly altering, or amending, the law of descents! It is scarcely necessary to say that every reputable court in the country, whether State or Federal, would brand such a law with the disgrace it merits.

But the worst feature of this law, or attempted law, remains to be noticed. It would have been a premium on murder. Murder *has* already been committed by these anti-renters, and that obviously to effect their ends; and they were to be told that whenever you shoot a landlord, as some have already often shot *at* them, you can convert your leasehold tenures into tenures in fee! The mode of valuation is so obvious, too, as to deserve a remark. A master was to settle the valuation on testimony. The witnesses of course would be "the neighbours," and a whole patent could swear for each other!

As democrats we protest most solemnly against such barefaced frauds, such palpable cupidity and covetousness, being termed anything but what they are. If they come of any party at all, it is the party of the devil.

Democracy is a lofty and noble sentiment. It does not rob the poor to make the rich richer, nor the rich to favour the poor. It is just, and treats all men alike. It does not "impair the obligations of contracts." It is not the friend of a canting legislation, but, meaning right, dares act directly. There is no greater delusion than to suppose that true democracy has anything in common with injustice or roguery.

Nor is it an apology for anti-rentism, in any of its aspects, to say that leasehold tenures are inexpedient. The most expedient thing in existence is to do right. Were there no other objection to this anti-rent movement than its corrupting influence, that alone should set every wise man in the community firmly against it. We have seen too much of this earth, to be so easily convinced that there is any disadvantage, nay that there is not a positive advantage in the existence of large leasehold estates, when they carry with them no political power, as is the fact here. The commonplace argument against them, that they defeat the civilization of a country, is not sustained by fact. The most civilized countries on earth are under this system; and this system, too, not entirely free from grave objections which do not exist among ourselves. That a poorer class of citizens have originally leased than have purchased lands in New York, is probably true; and it is equally probable that the effects of this poverty, and even of the tenure in the infancy of a country, are to be traced on the estates. But this is taking a very one-

sided view of the matter. The men who became tenant in moderate but comfortable circumstances, would have been mostly labourers on the farms of others, but for these leasehold tenures. That is the benefit of the system in a new country, and the ultra friend of humanity, who decries the condition of a tenant, should remember that if he had not been in this very condition, he might have been in a worse.

It is, indeed, one of the proofs of the insincerity of those who are decrying leases, on account of their aristocratic tendencies, that their destruction will necessarily condemn a numerous class of agriculturists, either to fall back into the ranks of the peasant or day-labourer, or to migrate, as is the case with so many of the same class in New England. In point of fact, the relation of landlord and tenant is one entirely natural and salutary, in a wealthy community, and one which is so much in accordance with the necessities of men, that no legislation can long prevent it. A state of things which will not encourage the rich to hold real estate would not be desirable, since it would be diverting their money, knowledge, liberality, feelings and leisure, from the improvement of the soil, to objects neither so useful nor so praiseworthy.

The notion that every husbandman is to be a freeholder, is as Utopian in practice, as it would be to expect that all men were to be on the same level in fortune, condition, education and habits. As such a state of things as the last never yet did exist, it was probably

never designed by Divine wisdom that it should exist. The whole structure of society must be changed, even in this country, ere it could exist among ourselves, and the change would not have been made a month before the utter impracticability of such a social fusion would make itself felt by all.

We have elsewhere imputed much of the anti-rent feeling to provincial education and habits. This term has given the deepest offence to those who were most obnoxious to the charge. Nevertheless, our opinion is unchanged. We know that the distance between the cataract of Niagara and the Massachusetts line is a large hundred leagues, and that it is as great between Sandy Hook and the 45th parallel of latitude. Many excellent things, moral and physical, are to be found within these limits, beyond a question; but we happen to know by an experience that has extended to other quarters of the world, for a term now exceeding forty years, that more are to found beyond them. If "honourable gentlemen" at Albany fancy the reverse, they must still permit us to believe that they are too much under the influence of provincial notions.

June, 1846.

RAVENSNEST;

OR,

THE REDSKINS.

CHAPTER I.

"Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and
She said—Thou wert my daughter; and thy father
Was duke of Milan; and his only heir
A princess;—no worse issued."

TEMPEST.

My uncle Ro and myself had been travelling together in the East, and had been absent from home fully five years, when we reached Paris. For eighteen months neither of us had seen a line from America, when we drove through the barriers, on our way from Egypt, viâ Algiers, Marseilles, and Lyons. Not once, in all that time, had we crossed our own track, in a way to enable us to pick up a straggling letter; and all our previous precautions to have the epistles

meet us at different bankers in Italy, Turkey, and Malta, were thrown away.

My uncle was an old traveller—I might almost say, an old resident—in Europe; for he had passed no less than twenty years of his fifty-nine off the American continent. A bachelor, with nothing to do but to take care of a very ample estate, which was rapidly increasing in value by the enormous growth of the town of New York, and with tastes early formed by travelling, it was natural he should seek those regions where he most enjoyed himself. Hugh Roger Littlepage was born in 1786—the second son of my grandfather, Mordaunt Littlepage, and of Ursula Malbone, his wife. My own father, Malbone Littlepage, was the eldest child of that connexion; and he would have inherited the property of Ravensnest, in virtue of his birthright, had he survived his own parents; but, dying young, I stepped into what would otherwise have been his succession, in my eighteenth year. My uncle Ro, however, had got both Satanstoe and Lilacsbush; two country-houses and farms, which, while they did not aspire to the dignity of being estates, were likely to prove more valuable, in the long run, than the broad acres which were intended for

the patrimony of the elder brother. My grandfather was affluent; for not only had the fortune of the Littlepages centred in him, but so did that of the Mordaunts, the wealthier family of the two, together with some exceedingly liberal bequests from a certain Col. Dirck Follock, or Van Valkenburgh; who, though only a very distant connexion, chose to make my great-grandmother's, or Anneke Mordaunt's, descendants his heirs. We all had enough; my aunts having handsome legacies, in the way of bonds and mortgages, on an estate called Mooseridge, in addition to some lots in town; while my own sister, Martha, had a clear fifty thousand dollars in money. I had town-lots, also, which were becoming productive; and a special minority of seven years had made an accumulation of cash that was well vested in New York State stock, and which promised well for the future. I say a "special" minority; for both my father and grandfather, in placing the one, myself and a portion of the property, and the other the remainder of my estate, under the guardianship and ward of my uncle, had made a provision that I was not to come into possession until I had completed my twenty-fifth year.

I left college at twenty; and my uncle Ro, for so Martha and myself always called him, and so he was always called by some twenty cousins, the offspring of our three aunts;—but my uncle Ro, when I was done with college, proposed to finish my education by travelling. As this was only too agreeable to a young man, away we went, just after the pressure of the great panic of 1836-7 was over, and our "lots" were in tolerable security, and our stocks safe. In America it requires almost as much vigilance to *take care* of property, as it does industry to acquire it.

Mr. Hugh Roger Littlepage—by the way, I bore the same name, though I was always called Hugh, while my uncle went by the different appellations of Roger, Ro, and Hodge, among his familiars, as circumstances had rendered the associations sentimental, affectionate, or manly—Mr. Hugh Roger Littlepage, Senior, then, had a system of his own, in the way of aiding the scales to fall from American eyes, by means of seeing more clearly than one does, or can, at home, let him belong where he may, and in clearing the specks of provincialism from off the diamond of republican water. He had already seen enough to ascertain that while

"our country," as this blessed nation is very apt on all occasions, appropriate or not, to be called by all who belong to it, as well as by a good many who do not, could teach a great deal to the old world, there was a possibility—just a *possibility*, remark, is my word—that it might also learn a little. With a view, therefore, of acquiring knowledge seriatim, as it might be, he was for beginning with the horn-book, and going on regularly up to the belles-lettres and mathematics. The manner in which this was effected deserves a notice.

Most American travellers land in England, the country farthest advanced in material civilisation; then proceed to Italy, and perhaps to Greece, leaving Germany, and the less attractive regions of the north, to come in at the end of the chapter. My uncle's theory was to follow the order of time, and to begin with the ancients, and end with the moderns; though, in adopting such a rule, he admitted he somewhat lessened the pleasure of the novice; since an American, fresh from the fresher fields of the western continent, might very well find delight in memorials of the past, more especially in England, which pall on his taste, and appear insignificant, after he has become familiar with the

Temple of Neptune, the Parthenon, or what is left of it, and the Coliseum. I make no doubt that I lost a great deal of passing happiness in this way, by beginning at the beginning, or by beginning in Italy, and travelling north.

Such was our course, however; and, landing at Leghorn, we did the peninsula effectually in a twelvemonth; thence passed through Spain up to Paris, and proceeded on to Moscow and the Baltic, reaching England from Hamburg. When we had got through with the British isles, the antiquities of which seemed flat and uninteresting to me, after having seen those that were so much more *antique*, we returned to Paris, in order that I might become a man of the world, if possible, by rubbing off the provincial specks that had unavoidably adhered to the American diamond while in its obscurity.

My uncle Ro was fond of Paris, and he had actually become the owner of a small hotel in the faubourg, in which he retained a handsome furnished apartment for his own use. The remainder of the house was let to permanent tenants; but the whole of the first floor, and of the *entresol*, remained in his hands. As a special favour, he would allow some American family to occupy even his own apartment—or

rather *appartement*, for the words are not exactly synonymous—when he intended to be absent for a term exceeding six months, using the money thus obtained in keeping the furniture in repair, and his handsome suite of rooms, including a *salon*, *salle à manger*, *ante-chambre*, *cabinet*, several *chambres à coucher*, and a *boudoir*—yes, a male *boudoir!* for so he affected to call it—in a condition to please even his fastidiousness.

On our arrival from England, we remained an entire season at Paris, all that time rubbing the specks off the diamond, when my uncle suddenly took it into his head that we ought to see the East. He had never been further than Greece, himself; and he now took a fancy to be my companion in such an excursion. We were gone two years and a half, visiting Greece, Constantinople, Asia Minor, the Holy Land, Petra, the Red Sea, Egypt quite to the second cataracts, and nearly the whole of Barbary. The latter region we threw in, by way of seeing something out of the common track, But so many hats and travelling-caps are to be met with, now-a-days, among the turbans, that a well-mannered Christian may get along almost anywhere without being spit upon. This is

a great inducement for travelling generally, and ought to be so especially to an American, who, on the whole, incurs rather more risk now of suffering this humiliation at home, than he would even in Algiers. But the animus is everything in morals.

We had, then, been absent two years and a half from Paris, and had not seen a paper, or received a letter from America in eighteen months, when we drove through the barrier. Even the letters and papers received or seen previously to this last term, were of a private nature, and contained nothing of a general character. The "twenty millions"—it was only the other day they were called the "twelve millions"—but, the "twenty millions," we knew, had been looking up amazingly after the temporary depression of the moneyed crisis it had gone through; and the bankers had paid our drafts with confidence, and without extra charges, during the whole time we had been absent. It is true, Uncle Ro, as an experienced traveller, went well fortified in the way of credit—a precaution by no means unnecessary with Americans, after the cry that had been raised against us in the old world.

And here I wish to say one thing plainly, before I write another line. As for falling into the narrow, self-adulatory, provincial feeling of the American who has never left his mother's apron-string, and which causes him to swallow, open-mouthed, all the nonsense that is uttered to the world in the columns of newspapers, or in the pages of your yearling travellers, who go on "excursions" before they are half instructed in the social usages and the distinctive features of their own country, I hope I shall be just as far removed from such a weakness, in any passing remark that may flow from my pen, as from the crime of confounding principles and denying facts in a way to do discredit to the land of my birth and that of my ancestors. I have lived long enough in the "world," not meaning thereby the south-east corner of the north-west township of Connecticut, to understand that we are a vast way behind older nations, in *thought* as well as deed, in many things; while, on the opposite hand, they are a vast way behind us in others. I see no patriotism in concealing a wholesome truth; and least of all shall I be influenced by the puerility of a desire to hide anything of this nature, because I cannot communicate it to my

countrymen without communicating it to the rest of the world. If England or France had acted on this narrow principle, where would have been their Shakspeares, their Sheridans, their Beaumonts and Fletchers, and their Molières! No, no! great national truths are not to be treated as the gossiping surmises of village crones. He who reads what I *write*, therefore, must expect to find what I *think* of matters and things, and not exactly what he may happen to think on the same subjects. Any one is at liberty to compare opinions with me; but I ask the privilege of possessing some small liberty of conscience in what is, far and near, proclaimed to be the only *free* country on the earth. By "far and near," I mean from the St. Croix to the Rio Grande, and from Cape Cod to the entrance of St. Juan de Fuca; and a pretty farm it makes, the "interval" that lies between these limits! One may call it "far and near" without the imputation of obscurity, or that of vanity.

Our tour was completed in spite of all annoyances; and here we were again, within the walls of magnificent Paris! The postilions had been told to drive to the hotel, in the rue St. Dominique; and we sat down to dinner, an hour

after our arrival under our own roof. My uncle's tenant had left the apartment a month before, according to agreement; and the porter and his wife had engaged a cook, set the rooms in order, and prepared everything for our arrival.

"It must be owned, Hugh," said my uncle, as he finished his soup that day, "one *may* live quite comfortably in Paris, if he possess the *savoir vivre*. Nevertheless, I have a strong desire to get a taste of native air. One may say and think what he pleases about the Paris pleasures, and the Paris *cuisine*, and all that sort of thing; but 'home is home, be it ever so homely.' A '*d'Inde aux truffes*' is capital eating; so is a turkey with cranberry sauce. I sometimes think I could fancy even a pumpkin pie, though there is not a fragment of the rock of Plymouth in the granite of my frame."

"I have always told you, sir, that America is a capital eating and drinking country, let it want civilisation in other matters, as much as it may."

"Capital for eating and drinking, Hugh, if you can keep clear of the grease, in the first place, and find a real cook in the second. There is as much difference between the cookery of

New England, for instance, and that of the Middle States, barring the Dutch, as there is between that of England and Germany. The cookery of the Middle States, and of the Southern States, too, though that savours a little of the West Indies — but the cookery of the Middle States is English, in its best sense; meaning the hearty, substantial, savoury dishes of the English in their true domestic life, with their roast-beef underdone, their beefsteaks done to a turn, their chops full of gravy, their mutton-broth, legs-of-mutton, *et id omne genus.* We have some capital things of our own, too; such as canvass-backs, reedbirds, sheepshead, shad, and blackfish. The difference between New England and the Middle States is still quite observable, though in my younger days it was *patent.* I suppose the cause has been the more provincial origin, and the more provincial habits, of our neighbours. By George! Hugh, one could fancy clam-soup just now, eh!"

"Clam-soup, sir, well made, is one of the most delicious soups in the world. If the cooks of Paris could get hold of the dish, it would set them up for a whole season."

"What is '*crême de Bavière,*' and all such

nick-nacks, boy, to a good plateful of clam-soup? Well made, as you say—made as a cook of Jennings' used to make it, thirty years since. Did I ever mention that fellow's soup to you before, Hugh?"

"Often, sir. I have tasted very excellent clam-soup, however, that he never saw. Of course you mean soup just flavoured by the little hard-clam—none of your vulgar *potage à la* soft-clam?"

"Soft-clams be hanged! they are not made for gentlemen to eat. Of course I mean the hard-clam, and the small clam, too—

'Here's your fine clams,'
As white as snow;
On Rockaway
These clams do grow.'

The cries of New York are quite going out, like everything else at home that is twenty years old. Shall I send you some of this eternal '*poulet à la Marengo?*' I wish it were honest American boiled fowl, with a delicate bit of shoat-pork alongside of it. I feel amazingly *homeish* this evening, Hugh!"

"It is quite natural, my dear uncle Ro; and I own to the 'soft impeachment' myself. Here have we both been absent from our native land

five years, and half that time almost without hearing from it. We know that Jacob"—this was a free negro who served my uncle, a relic of the old domestic system of the colonies, whose name would have been Jaaf, or Yop, thirty years before—" has gone to our banker's for letters and papers; and that naturally draws our thoughts to the other side of the Atlantic. I dare say we shall both feel relieved at breakfast to-morrow, when we shall have read our respective despatches."

" Come, let us take a glass of wine together, in the good old York fashion, Hugh. Your father and I, when boys, never thought of wetting our lips with the half-glass of Madeira that fell to our share, without saying, ' Good health, Mall!' ' Good health, Hodge!' "

" With all my heart, uncle Ro. The custom was getting to be a little obsolete even before I left home; but it is almost an American custom, by sticking to us longer than to most people."

" Henri!"

This was my uncle's maitre d'hotel, whom he had kept at board-wages the whole time of our absence, in order to make sure of his ease, quiet, taste, skill, and honesty, on his return.

"Monsieur!"

"I dare say"—my uncle spoke French exceedingly well for a foreigner; but it is better to translate what he said as we go—"I dare say this glass of vin de Bourgogne is very good; it *looks* good, and it came from a wine-merchant on whom I can rely; but Mons. Hugh and I are going to drink together, à l'Américaine, and I dare say you will let us have a glass of Madeira, though it is somewhat late in the dinner to take it."

"Tres volontiers, Messieurs—it is my happiness to oblige you."

Uncle Ro and I took the Madeira together; but I cannot say much in favour of its quality.

"What a capital thing is a good Newtown pippin!" exclaimed my uncle, after eating a while in silence. "They talk a great deal about their *poire beurrée*, here at Paris; but, to my fancy, it will not compare with the Newtowners we grow at Satanstoe, where, by the way, the fruit is rather better, I think, than that one finds across the river, at Newtown itself."

"They are capital apples, sir; and your orchard at Satanstoe is one of the best I know, or rather what is left of it; for I believe a por-

tion of your trees are in what is now a suburb of Dibbletonborough?"

"Yes, b—t that place! I wish I had never parted with a foot of the old neck, though I did rather make money by the sale. But money is no compensation for the affections."

"*Rather* make money, my dear sir! Pray, may I ask what Satanstoe was valued at, when you got it from my grandfather?"

"Pretty well up, Hugh; for it was, and indeed *is*, a first-rate farm. Including sedges and salt-meadows, you will remember that there are quite five hundred acres of it, altogether."

"Which you inherited in 1829?"

"Of course; that was the year of my father's death. Why the place was thought to be worth about thirty thousand dollars at that time; but land was rather low in Westchester in 1829."

"And you sold two hundred acres, including the point, the harbour, and a good deal of the sedges, for the moderate modicum of one hundred and ten thousand, cash. A tolerable sale, sir!"

"No, not cash. I got only eighty thousand down, while thirty thousand were secured by mortgage."

"Which mortgage you hold yet, I dare say, if the truth were told, covering the whole city

of Dibbletonborough. A city ought to be good security for thirty thousand dollars!"

"It is not, nevertheless, in this case. The speculators who bought of me in 1835 laid out their town, built a hotel, a wharf, and a warehouse, and then had an auction. They sold four hundred lots, each twenty-five feet by a hundred, regulation size, you see, at an average of two hundred and fifty dollars, receiving one-half, or fifty thousand dollars, down, and leaving the balance on mortgage. Soon after this, the bubble burst, and the best lot at Dibbletonborough would not bring, under the hammer, twenty dollars. The hotel and the warehouse stand alone in their glory, and will thus stand until they fall, which will not be a thousand years hence, I rather think."

"And what is the condition of the town-plot?"

"Bad enough. The landmarks are disappearing; and it would cost any man who should attempt it the value of his lot to hire a surveyor to find his twenty-five by a hundred."

"But your mortgage is good?"

"Ay, good in one sense; but it would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to foreclose it. Why, the equitable interests in that town-plot people

the place of themselves. I ordered my agent to commence buying up the rights, as the shortest process of getting rid of them; and he told me in the very last letter I received, that he had succeeded in purchasing the titles to three hundred and seventeen of the lots, at an average price of ten dollars. The remainder, I suppose, will have to be absorbed."

"Absorbed! That is a process I never heard of, as applied to land."

"There is a good deal of it done, notwithstanding, in America. It is merely including within your own possession adjacent land for which no claimant appears. What can I do? No owners are to be found; and then my mortgage is always a title. A possession of twenty years under a mortgage is as good as a deed in fee-simple, with full covenants of warranty, barring minors and *femmes covert*."

"You did better by Lilacsbush?"

"Ah, *that* was a clean transaction, and has left no drawbacks. Lilacsbush being on the island of Manhattan, one is sure there will be a town there some day or other. It is true, the property lies quite eight miles from the City Hall; nevertheless, it has a value, and can always be sold at something near it.

Then the plan of New York is made and recorded, and one can find his lots. Nor can any man say when the town will not reach Kingsbridge."

"You got a round price for the Bush, too, I have heard, sir?"

"I got three hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, in hard cash. I would give no credit, and have every dollar of the money, at this moment, in good six per cent. stock of the States of New York and Ohio."

"Which some persons in this part of the world would fancy to be no very secure investment."

"More fools they. America is a glorious country, after all, Hugh; and it is a pride and a satisfaction to belong to it. Look back at it, as I can remember it, a nation spit upon by all the rest of Christendom——"

"You must, at least, own, my dear sir," I put in, somewhat pertly, perhaps, "the example might tempt other people; for, if ever there was a nation that is assiduously spitting on itself, it is our own beloved land."

"True, it has that nasty custom in excess, and it grows worse instead of better, as the influence of the better mannered and better

educated diminishes; but this is a spot on the sun—a mere flaw in the diamond, that friction will take out. But what a country—what a glorious country, in truth, it is! You have now done the civilized parts of the old world pretty thoroughly, my dear boy, and must be persuaded, yourself, of the superiority of your native land."

"I remember you have always used this language, uncle Ro; yet have you passed nearly one-half of your time *out* of that glorious country, since you have reached man's estate."

"The mere consequence of accidents and tastes. I do not mean that America is a country for a bachelor, to begin with; the means of amusement for those who have no domestic hearths, are too limited for the bachelor. Nor do I mean that society in America, in its ordinary meaning, is in any way as well-ordered, as tasteful, as well-mannered, as agreeable, or as instructive and useful, as society in almost any European country I know. I have never supposed that the man of leisure, apart from the affections, could ever enjoy himself half as much at home, as he may enjoy himself in this part of the world; and I am willing to admit that, intellec-

tually, most gentlemen in a great European capital live as much in one day, as they would live in a week in such places as New York, and Philadelphia, and Baltimore."

"You do not include Boston, I perceive, sir."

"Of Boston I say nothing. They take the mind hard there, and we had better let such a state of things alone. But as respects a man or woman of leisure, a man or woman of taste, a man or woman of refinement generally, I am willing enough to admit that, *cæteris paribus*, each can find far more enjoyment in Europe than in America. But the philosopher, the philanthropist, the political economist—in a word, the patriot, may well exult in such elements of profound national superiority as may be found in America."

"I hope these elements are not so profound but they can be dug up at need, uncle Ro?"

"There will be little difficulty in doing that, my boy. Look at the equality of the laws, to begin with. They are made on the principles of natural justice, and are intended for the benefit of society—for the poor as well as the rich."

"Are they also intended for the rich as well as the poor?"

"Well, I will grant you a slight blemish is beginning to appear, in that particular. It is a failing incidental to humanity, and we must not expect perfection. There is certainly a slight disposition to legislate for numbers, in order to obtain support at the polls, which has made the relation of debtor and creditor a little insecure, possibly; but prudence can easily get along with that. It is erring on the right side, is it not, to favour the poor instead of the rich, if either is to be preferred?"

"Justice would favour neither, but treat all alike. I have always heard that the tyranny of numbers was the worst tyranny in the world."

"Perhaps it is, where there is actually tyranny, and for a very obvious reason. One tyrant is sooner satisfied than a million, and has even a greater sense of responsibility. I can easily conceive that the Czar himself, if disposed to be a tyrant, which I am far from thinking to be the case with Nicholas, might hesitate about doing that, under his undivided responsibility, which one of our majorities would do, without even being conscious of the oppression it exercised, or caring at all about it. But, on the whole, we do little of the last, and not

in the least enough to counterbalance the immense advantages of the system."

"I have heard very discreet men say that the worst symptom of our system is the gradual decay of justice among us. The judges have lost most of their influence, and the jurors are getting to be law-makers, as well as law-breakers."

"There is a good deal of truth in that, I will acknowledge, also; and you hear it asked constantly, in a case of any interest, not which party is in the right, but *who* is on the jury. But I contend for no perfection; all I say is, that the country is a glorious country, and that you and I have every reason to be proud that old Hugh Roger, our predecessor and namesake, saw fit to transplant himself into it, a century and a half since."

"I dare say now, uncle Ro, it would strike most Europeans as singular that a man should be proud of having been born an American—Manhattanese, as you and I both were."

"All that may be true, for there have been calculated attempts to bring us into discredit of late, by harping on the failure of certain States to pay the interest on their debts. But all that is easily answered, and more so by you

and me as New Yorkers. There is not a nation in Europe that would pay its interest, if those who are taxed to do so had the control of these taxes, and the power to say whether they were to be levied or not."

"I do not see how that mends the matter. These countries tell us that such is the effect of your *system* there, while we are too honest to allow such a system to *exist* in this part of the world."

"Pooh! all gammon, that. They prevent the existence of our system for very different reasons, and they coerce the payment of the interest on their debts that they may borrow more. This business of repudiation, as it is called, however, has been miserably misrepresented; and there is no answering a falsehood by an argument. No American State has repudiated its debt, that I know of, though several have been unable to meet their engagements as they have fallen due."

"*Unable*, uncle Ro?"

"Yes, *unable*—that is the precise word. Take Pennsylvania, for instance; that is one of the richest communities in the civilized world; its coal and iron alone would make any country affluent, and a portion of its agricultural popu-

lation is one of the most affluent I know of. Nevertheless, Pennsylvania, owing to a concurrence of events, *could* not pay the interest on her debt for two years and a half, though she is doing it now, and will doubtless continue to do it. The sudden breaking down of that colossal moneyed institution, the *soi-disant* Bank of the United States, after it ceased to be in reality a bank of the government, brought about such a state of the circulation as rendered payment, by any of the ordinary means known to government, *impossible*—I know what I say, and repeat, *impossible*. It is well known that many persons, accustomed to affluence, had to carry their plate to the mint, in order to obtain money to go to market. Then something may be attributed to the institutions, without disparaging a people's honesty. Our institutions are popular, just as those of France are the reverse; and the people, they who were on the spot—the home creditor, with his account unpaid, and with his friends and relatives in the legislature, and present to aid him, contended for his own money, before any should be sent abroad."

"Was that exactly right, sir?"

"Certainly not; it was exactly wrong; but

very particularly natural. Do you suppose the King of France would not take the money for his civil list, if circumstances should compel the country to suspend on the debt for a year or two, or the ministers their salaries? My word for it, each and all of them would prefer themselves as creditors, and act accordingly. Every one of these countries has suspended in some form or other, and in many instances balanced the account with the sponge. Their clamour against us is altogether calculated with a view to political effect."

"Still, I wish Pennsylvania, for instance, had continued to pay, at every hazard."

"It is well enough to wish, Hugh; but it is wishing for an impossibility. Then, you and I, as New Yorkers, have nothing to do with the debt of Pennsylvania, no more than London would have to do with the debt of Dublin or Quebec. *We* have always paid *our* interest, and, what is more, paid it more honestly, if honesty be the point, than even England has paid hers. When *our* banks suspended, the State paid its interest in as much paper as would buy the specie in open market; whereas England made paper legal tender, and paid the interest on her debt in it for something like

five-and-twenty years, and, that, too, when her paper was at a large discount. I knew of one American who held near a million of dollars in the English debt, on which he had to take unconvertible paper for the interest for a long series of years. No, no! this is all gammon, Hugh, and is not to be regarded as making us a whit worse than our neighbours. The equality of our laws is the fact in which I glory!"

"If the rich stood as fair a chance as the poor, uncle Ro."

"There *is* a screw loose there, I must confess; but it amounts to no great matter."

"Then the late bankrupt law?"

"Ay, that was an infernal procedure—that much I will acknowledge, too. It was special legislation enacted to pay particular debts, and the law was repealed as soon as it had done its duty. That is a much darker spot in our history than what is called repudiation, though perfectly honest men voted for it."

"Did you ever hear of a farce they got up about it at New York, just after we sailed?"

"Never; what was it, Hugh? though American plays are pretty much all farces."

"This was a little better than common, and, on the whole, really clever. It is the old story

of Faust, in which a young spendthrift sells himself, soul and body, to the devil. On a certain evening, as he is making merry with a set of wild companions, his creditor arrives, and, insisting on seeing the master, is admitted by the servant. He comes on, club-footed and behorned, as usual, and betailed, too, I believe; but Tom is not to be scared by trifles. He insists on his guest's being seated, on his taking a glass of wine, and then on Dick's finishing his song. But, though the rest of the company had signed no bonds to Satan, they had certain outstanding book-debts, which made them excessively uncomfortable; and the odour of brimstone being rather strong, Tom arose, approached his guest, and desired to know the nature of the particular business he had mentioned to his servant. 'This bond, sir,' said Satan significantly. 'This bond? what of it, pray? It seems all right.' 'Is not that your signature?' 'I admit it.' 'Signed in your blood?' 'A conceit of your own; I told you at the time that ink was just as good in law.' 'It is past due, seven minutes and fourteen seconds.' 'So it is, I declare! but what of that?' 'I demand payment.' 'Nonsense! no one thinks of paying now-a-days. Why, even

Pennsylvania and Maryland don't pay.' 'I insist on payment.' 'Oh! you do, do you?' Tom draws a paper from his pocket, and adds, magnificently, 'There, then, if you're so urgent —there is a discharge under the new bankrupt law, signed Smith Thompson.' This knocked the devil into a cocked-hat at once."

My uncle laughed heartily at my story; but, instead of taking the matter as I had fancied he might, it made him think better of the country than ever.

"Well, Hugh, we have wit among us, it must be confessed," he cried, with the tears running down his cheeks, "if we have some rascally laws, and some rascals to administer them. But here comes Jacob with his letters and papers—I declare, the fellow has a large basket-full."

Jacob, a highly respectable black, and the great-grandson of an old negro named Jaaf, or Yop, who was then living on my own estate at Ravensnest, had just then entered, with the porter and himself lugging in the basket in question. There were several hundred newspapers, and quite a hundred letters. The sight brought home and America clearly and vividly before us; and, having nearly finished the dessert,

we rose to look at the packages. It was no small task to sort our mail, there being so many letters and packages to be divided.

"Here are some newspapers I never saw before," said my uncle, as he turned over the pile; "'The Guardian of the Soil'—that must have something to do with Oregon."

"I dare say it has, sir. Here are at least a dozen letters from my sister."

"Ay, *your* sister is single, and can still think of her brother; but mine are married, and one letter a-year would be a great deal. This is my dear old mother's hand, however; that is something. Ursula Malbone would never forget her child. Well, *bon soir*, Hugh. Each of us has enough to do for one evening."

"*Au revoir*, sir. We shall meet at ten to-morrow, when we can compare our news, and exchange gossip."

CHAPTER II.

"Why droops my lord, like over-ripen'd corn,
Hanging the head at Ceres' plenteous load?"
King Henry VI.

I DID not get into my bed that night until two, nor was I out of it until half-past nine. It was near eleven when Jacob came to tell me his master was in the *salle à manger*, and ready to eat his breakfast. I hastened up stairs, sleeping in the *entresol*, and was at table with my uncle in three minutes. I observed, on entering, that he was very grave, and I now perceived that a couple of letters, and several American newspapers, lay near him. His "Good morrow, Hugh," was kind and affectionate as usual, but I fancied it sad.

"No bad news from home, I hope, sir!" I exclaimed, under the first impulse of feeling. "Martha's last letter is of quite recent date,

and she writes very cheerfully. I *know* that my grandmother was perfectly well, six weeks since."

"I know the same, Hugh, for I have a letter from herself, written with her own blessed hand. My mother is in excellent health for a woman of fourscore; but she naturally wishes to see us, and you in particular. Grandchildren are ever the pets with grandmothers."

"I am glad to hear all this, sir; for I was really afraid, on entering the room, that you had received some unpleasant news."

"And is all your news pleasant, after so long a silence?"

"Nothing that is disagreeable, I do assure you. Patt writes in charming spirits, and I dare say is in blooming beauty by this time, though she tells me that she is generally thought rather plain. *That* is impossible; for you know when we left her, at fifteen, she had every promise of great beauty."

"As you say, it is impossible that Martha Littlepage should be anything but handsome; for fifteen is an age when, in America, one may safely predict the woman's appearance. Your sister is preparing for you an agreeable surprise. I have heard old persons say that she was very

like my mother at the same time of life; and Dus Malbone was a sort of toast once in the forest."

"I dare say it is all as you think; more especially as there are several allusions to a certain Harry Beekman in her letters, at which I should feel flattered, were I in Mr. Harry's place. Do you happen to know anything of such a family as the Beekmans, sir?"

My uncle looked up in a little surprise at this question. A thorough New Yorker by birth, associations, alliances, and feelings, he held all the old names of the colony and State in profound respect; and I had often heard him sneer at the manner in which the new-comers of my day, who had appeared among us to blossom like the rose, scattered their odours through the land. It was but a natural thing that a community which had grown in population in half a century, from half a million to two millions and a half, and that as much by immigration from adjoining communities as by natural increase, should undergo some change of feeling in this respect; but, on the other hand, it was just as natural that the true New Yorker should not.

"Of course you know, Hugh, that it is an

ancient and respected name among us," answered my uncle, after he had given me the look of surprise I have already mentioned. "There is a branch of the Beekmans, or Bakemans, as we used to call them, settled near Satanstoe,; and I dare say that your sister, in her frequent visits to my mother, has met with them. The association would be but natural; and the other feeling to which you allude is, I dare say, but natural to the association, though I cannot say I ever experienced it."

"You will still adhere to your asseverations of never having been the victim of Cupid, I find, sir."

"Hugh, Hugh! let us trifle no more. There *is* news from home that has almost broken my heart."

I sat gazing at my uncle in wonder and alarm, while he placed both his hands on his face, as if to exclude this wicked world, and all it contained, from his sight. I did not speak, for I saw that the old gentleman was really affected, but waited his pleasure to communicate more. My impatience was soon relieved, however, as the hands were removed, and I once more caught a view of my uncle's handsome but clouded countenance.

"May I ask the nature of this news?" I then ventured to inquire.

"You may, and I shall now tell you. It is proper, indeed, that you should hear all, and understand it all; for you have a direct interest in the matter, and a large portion of your property is dependent on the result. Had not the manor troubles, as they were called, been spoken of before we left home?"

"Certainly, though not to any great extent. We saw something of it in the papers, I remember, just before we went to Russia; and I recollect you mentioned it as a discreditable affair to the State, though likely to lead to no very important result."

"So I then thought; but that hope has been delusive. There were some reasons why a population like ours should chafe under the situation of the estate of the late Patroon, that I thought natural, though unjustifiable; for it is unhappily too much a law of humanity to do that which is wrong, more especially in matters connected with the pocket."

"I do not exactly understand your allusion, sir."

"It is easily explained. The Van Rensselaer property is, in the first place, of great extent—the manor, as it is still called and once was,

spreading east and west eight-and-forty miles, and north and south twenty-four. With a few immaterial exceptions, including the sites of three or four towns, three of which are cities, containing respectively six, twenty and forty thousand souls, this large surface was the property of a single individual. Since his death it has become the property of two, subject to the conditions of the leases, of which by far the greater portion are what are called durable."

"I have heard all this, of course, sir, and know something of it myself. But what is a durable lease? for I believe we have none of that nature at Ravensnest."

"No; your leases are all for three lives, and most of them renewals at that. There are two sorts of 'durable leases,' as we term them, in use among the landlords of New York. Both give the tenant a permanent interest, being leases for ever, reserving an annual rent, with the right to distrain, and covenants of re-entry. But one class of these leases gives the tenant a right at any time to demand a deed in fee-simple, on the payment of a stipulated sum; while the other gives him no such privilege. Thus one class of these leases is called 'a durable lease with a clause of redemption;' while the other is a simple 'durable lease.'"

"And are there any new difficulties in relation to the manor rents?"

"Far worse than that; the contagion has spread, until the greatest ills that have been predicted from democratic institutions, by their worst enemies, seriously menace the country. I am afraid, Hugh, I shall not be able to call New York, any longer, an exception to the evil example of a neighbourhood, or the country itself a glorious country."

"This is so serious, sir, that, were it not that your looks denote the contrary, I might be disposed to doubt your words."

"I fear my words are only too true. Dunning has written me a long account of his own, made out with the precision of a lawyer; and, in addition, he has sent me divers papers, some of which openly contend for what is substantially a new division of property, and what in effect would be agrarian laws."

"Surely, my dear uncle, you cannot seriously apprehend anything of that nature from our order-loving, law-loving, property-loving Americans?"

"Your last description may contain the secret of the whole movement. The love of property may be so strong as to induce them to

do a great many things they ought not to do. I certainly do not apprehend that any direct attempt is about to be made, in New York, to divide its property; nor do I fear any open, declared agrarian statute; for what I apprehend is to come through indirect and gradual innovations on the right, that will be made to assume the delusive aspect of justice and equal rights, and thus undermine the principles of the people, before they are aware of the danger themselves. In order that you may not only understand me, but may understand facts that are of the last importance to your own pocket, I will first tell you what has been done, and then tell you what I fear is to follow. The first difficulty—or, rather, the first difficulty of recent occurrence—arose at the death of the late Patroon. I say of recent occurrence, since Dunning writes me that, during the administration of John Jay, an attempt to resist the payment of rent was made on the manor of the Livingstons; but *he* put it down *instanter*."

"Yes, I should rather think that roguery would not be apt to prosper, while the execution of the laws was entrusted to such a man. The age of such politicians, however, seems to have ended among us."

"It did not prosper. Governor Jay met the pretension as we all know such a man would meet it; and the matter died away, and has been nearly forgotten. It is worthy of remark, that *he* PUT THE EVIL DOWN. But this is not the age of John Jays. To proceed to my narrative: When the late Patroon died, there was due to him a sum of something like two hundred thousand dollars of back-rents, and of which he had made a special disposition in his will, vesting the money in trustees for a certain purpose. It was the attempt to collect this money which first gave rise to dissatisfaction. Those who had been debtors so long, were reluctant to pay. In casting round for the means to escape from the payment of their just debts, these men, feeling the power that numbers ever give over right in America, combined to resist with others who again had in view a project to get rid of the rents altogether. Out of this combination grew what have been called the 'manor troubles.' Men appeared in a sort of mock-Indian dress, calico shirts thrown over their other clothes, and with a species of calico masks on their faces, who resisted the bailiffs' processes, and completely prevented the collection of rents. These men were armed,

mostly with rifles; and it was finally found necessary to call out a strong body of the militia, in order to protect the civil officers in the execution of their duties."

"All this occurred before we went to the East. I had supposed *those* anti-renters, as they were called, had been effectually put down."

"In appearance they were. But the very governor who called the militia into the field, referred the subject of the '*griefs*' of the tenants to the legislature, as if they were actually aggrieved citizens, when in truth it was the landlords, or the Rensselaers, for at that time the 'troubles' were confined to their property, who were the aggrieved parties. This false step has done an incalculable amount of mischief, if it do not prove the entering wedge to rive asunder the institutions of the State."

"It is extraordinary, when such things occur, that any man can mistake his duty. Why were the tenants thus spoken of, while nothing was said beyond what the law compelled in favour of the landlords?"

"I can see no reason, but the fact that the Rensselaers were only two, and that the disaffected tenants were probably two thousand.

With all the cry of aristocracy, and feudality, and nobility, neither of the Rensselaers, by the letter of the law, has one particle more of political power, or political right, than his own coachman or footman, if the last be a white man; while, in practice, he is in many things getting to be less protected."

"Then you think, sir, that this matter has gained force from the circumstance that so many votes depend on it?"

"Out of all question. Its success depends on the violations of principles that we have been so long taught to hold sacred, that nothing short of the overruling and corrupting influence of politics would dare to assail them. If there were a landlord to each farm, as well as a tenant, universal indifference would prevail as to the griefs of the tenants; and if two to one tenant, universal indignation at their impudence."

"Of what particular griefs do the tenants complain?"

"You mean the Rensselaer tenants, I suppose? Why, they *complain* of such covenants as they can, though their deepest affliction is to be found in the fact that they do not own other men's lands. The Patroon had quarter sales on

many of his farms—those that were let in the last century."

"Well, what of that? A bargain to allow of quarter sales is just as fair as any other bargain."

"It is fairer, in fact, than most bargains, when you come to analyze it, since there is a very good reason why it should accompany a perpetual lease. Is it to be supposed that a landlord has no interest in the character and habits of his tenants? He has the closest interest in it possible, and no prudent man should let his lands without holding some sort of control over the assignment of leases. Now, there are but two modes of doing this; either by holding over the tenant a power through his interests, or a direct veto dependent solely on the landlord's will."

"The last would be apt to raise a pretty cry of tyranny and feudality in America!"

"Pretty cries on such subjects are very easily raised in America. More people join in them than understand what they mean. Nevertheless, it is quite as just, when two men bargain, that he who owns every right in the land before the bargain is made, should retain this right over his property, which he consents

to part with only with limitations, as that he should grant it to another. These men, in their clamour, forget that, until their leases were obtained, they had no right in their lands at all, and that what they have got is through those very leases of which they complain; take away the leases, and they would have no rights remaining. Now, on what principle can honest men pretend that they have rights beyond the leases? On the supposition, even, that the bargains are hard, what have governors and legislators to do with thrusting themselves in between parties so situated as special umpires? I should object to such umpires, moreover, on the general and controlling principle that must govern all righteous arbitration,—your governors and legislators are not *impartial*;—they are political or party men, one may say, without exception; and such umpires, when votes are in the question, are to be sorely distrusted. I would as soon trust my interests to the decision of feed counsel, as trust them to such judges."

"I wonder the really impartial and upright portion of the community do not rise in their might, and put this thing down—rip it up, root and branch, and cast it way, at once."

"That is the weak point of our system, which

has a hundred strong points, while it has this besetting vice. Our laws are not only made, but they are administered, on the supposition that there are both honesty and intelligence enough in the body of the community to see them *well* made, and *well* administered. But the sad reality shows that good men are commonly passive, until abuses become intolerable; it being the designing rogue and manager who is usually the most active. Vigilant philanthropists *do* exist, I will allow; but it is in such small numbers as to effect little on the whole, and nothing at all when opposed by the zeal of a mercenary opposition. No, no,—little is ever to be expected, in a political sense, from the activity of virtue; while a great deal may be looked for from the activity of vice."

"You do not take a very favourable view of humanity, sir."

"I speak of the world as I have found it in both hemispheres, or, as your neighbour the magistrate, 'Squire Newcome, has it, the 'four hemispheres.' Our representation is, at the best, but an average of the qualities of the whole community, somewhat lessened by the fact, that men of real merit have taken a disgust at a state of things that is not very tempt-

ing to their habits or tastes. As for a quarter sale, I can see no more hardship in it than there is in paying the rent itself; and, by giving the landlord this check on the transfer of his lands, he compels a compromise that maintains what is just. The tenant is not obliged to sell, and he makes his conditions accordingly, when he has a good tenant to offer in his stead. When he offers a bad tenant, he ought to pay for it."

"Many persons with us would think it very aristocratic," I cried laughingly, "that a landlord should have it in his power to say, I will not accept this or that substitute for yourself."

"It is just as aristocratic, and no more so, than it would be to put it in the power of the tenant to say to the landlord, you *shall* accept this or that tenant at my hands. The covenant of the quarter sale gives each party a control in the matter; and the result has ever been a compromise that is perfectly fair, as it is hardly possible that the circumstance should have been overlooked in making the bargain; and he who knows anything of such matters, knows that every exaction of this sort is always considered in the rent. As for feudality, so long as the power to alienate exists at all in the tenant, he does not hold by a feudal tenure. He has

bought himself from all such tenures by his covenant of quarter sale; and it only remains to say whether, having agreed to such a bargain in order to obtain this advantage, he should pay the stipulated price or not."

"I understand you, sir. It is easy to come at the equity of this matter, if one will only go back to the original facts which colour it. The tenant had no rights at all until he got his lease, and can have no rights which that lease does not confer."

"Then the cry is raised of feudal privileges, because some of the Rensselaer tenants are obliged to find so many days' work with their teams, or substitutes, to the landlord, and even because they have to pay annually a pair of fat fowls! *We* have seen enough of America, Hugh, to know that most husbandmen would be delighted to have the privilege of paying their debts in chickens and work, instead of in money, which renders the cry only so much the more wicked. But what is there more feudal in a tenant's thus paying his landlord, than in a butcher's contracting to furnish so much meat for a series of years, or a mail contractor's agreeing to carry the mail in a four-horse coach for a term of years, eh? No one

objects to the rent in wheat, and why should they object to the rent in chickens? Is it because our republican farmers have got to be so *aristocratic* themselves, that they do not like to be thought poulterers? This is being aristocratic on the other side. These dignitaries should remember that if it be plebeian to furnish fowls, it is plebeian to receive them; and if the tenant has to find an individual who has to submit to the degradation of tendering a pair of fat fowls, the landlord has to find an individual who has to submit to the degradation of taking them, and of putting them away in the larder. It seems to me that one is an offset to the other."

"But, if I remember rightly, uncle Ro, these little matters were always commuted for in money."

"They always must lie at the option of the tenant, unless the covenants went to forfeiture, which I never heard that they did; for the failure to pay in kind at the time stipulated, would only involve a payment in money afterwards. The most surprising part of this whole transaction is, that men among us hold the doctrine that these leasehold estates are opposed to our institutions, when, being guaranteed *by*

the institutions, they in truth form a part of them. Were it not for these very institutions, to which they are said to be opposed, and of which they virtually form a part, we should soon have a pretty kettle of fish between landlord and tenant."

"How do you make it out that they form a part of the institutions, sir?"

"Simply because the institutions have a solemn profession of protecting property. There is such a parade of this, that all our constitutions declare that property shall never be taken without due form of law; and to read one of them, you would think the property of the citizen is held quite as sacred as his person. Now, some of these very tenures existed when the State institutions were framed; and, not satisfied with this, we of New York, in common with our sister States, solemnly prohibited ourselves, in the constitution of the United States, from ever meddling with them! Nevertheless, men are found hardy enough to assert that a thing which, in fact belongs to the institutions, is opposed to them."

"Perhaps they mean, sir, to their spirit, or to their tendency."

"Ah! there may be some sense in that,

though much less than the declaimers fancy. The spirit of institutions is their legitimate object; and it would be hard to prove that a leasehold tenure, with any conditions of mere pecuniary indebtedness whatever, is opposed to any institutions that recognise the full rights of property. The obligation to pay rent no more creates political dependency, than to give credit from an ordinary shop; not so much, indeed, more especially under such leases as those of the Rensselaers; for the debtor on a book-debt can be sued at any moment, whereas the tenant knows precisely when he has to pay. There is the great absurdity of those who decry the system as feudal and aristocratic; for they do not see that those very leases are more favourable to the tenant than any other."

"I shall have to ask you to explain this to me, sir, being too ignorant to comprehend it."

"Why, these leases are perpetual, and the tenant cannot be dispossessed. The longer a lease is, other things being equal, the better it is for the tenant, all the world over. Let us suppose two farms, the one leased for five years, and the other for ever: Which tenant is most independent of the political influence of his landlord, to say nothing of impossibility of the

controlling votes in this way in America, from a variety of causes? Certainly he who has a lease for ever. He is just as independent of his landlord, as his landlord can be of him, with the exception that he has rent to pay. In the latter case, he is precisely like any other debtor —like the poor man who contracts debts with the same storekeeper for a series of years. As for the possession of the farm, which we are to suppose is a desirable thing for the tenant, he of the long lease is clearly most independent, since the other may be ejected at the end of each five years. Nor is there the least difference as to acquiring the property in fee, since the landlord may sell equally in either case, if so disposed: and if NOT DISPOSED, NO HONEST MAN, UNDER ANY SYSTEM, OUGHT TO DO ANYTHING TO COMPEL HIM SO TO DO, either directly or indirectly; AND NO TRULY HONEST MAN WOULD."

I put some of the words of my uncle Ro in small capitals, as the spirit of the *times*, not of the *institutions*, renders such hints necessary. But, to continue our dialogue:

"I understand you now, sir, though the distinction you make between the *spirit* of the institutions and their *tendencies* is what I do not exactly comprehend."

"It is very easily explained. The spirit of the institutions is their *intention;* their tendencies is the natural direction they take under the impulses of human motives, which are always corrupt and corrupting. The 'spirit' refers to what things *ought* to be; the 'tendencies,' to what they *are,* or are *becoming.* The 'spirit' of all political institutions is to place a check on the natural propensities of men, to restrain them, and keep them within due bounds; while the tendencies *follow* those propensities, and are often quite in direct opposition to the spirit. That this outcry against leasehold tenures in America is following the tendencies of our institutions, I am afraid is only too true; but that it is in any manner in compliance with their *spirit,* I utterly deny."

"You will allow that institutions have their spirit, which ought always to be respected, in order to preserve harmony?"

"Out of all question. The first great requisite of a political system is the means of protecting itself; the second, to check its tendencies at the point required by justice, wisdom, and good faith. In a despotism, for instance, the spirit of the system is to maintain that one man, who is elevated above the neces-

sities and temptations of a nation—who is solemnly set apart for the sole purpose of government, fortified by dignity, and rendered impartial by position—will rule in the manner most conducive to the true interests of his subjects. It is just as much the theory of Russia and Prussia that their monarchs reign not for their own good, but for the good of those over whom they are placed, as it is the theory in regard to the President of the United States. We all know that the tendencies of a despotism are to abuses of a particular character; and it is just as certain that the tendencies of a republic, or rather of a democratic republic—for republic of itself means but little, many republics having had kings—but it is just as certain that the tendencies of a democracy are to abuses of another character. Whatever man touches, he infallibly abuses; and this more in connexion with the exercise of political power, perhaps, than in the management of any one interest of life, though he abuses all, even to religion. Less depends on the nominal character of institutions, perhaps, than on their ability to arrest their own tendencies at the point required by everything that is just and right. Hitherto, surprisingly few *grave* abuses

have followed from our institutions; but this matter looks frightfully serious; for I have not told you half, Hugh."

"Indeed, sir! I beg you will believe me quite equal to hearing the worst."

"It is true, anti-rentism did commence on the estate of the Rensselaers, and with complaints of feudal tenures, and of days' works, and fat fowls, backed by the extravagantly aristocratic pretension that a 'manor' tenant was so much a privileged being, that it was beneath his dignity, as a free man, to do, that which is daily done by mail-contractors, stage-coach owners, victuallers, and even by themselves in their passing bargains to deliver potatoes, onions, turkeys and pork, although they had solemnly covenanted with their landlords to pay the fat fowls, and to give the days' works. The feudal system has been found to extend much further, and 'troubles,' as they are called, have broken out in other parts of the State. Resistance to process, and a cessation of the payment of rents, has occurred on the Livingston property, in Hardenberg—in short, in eight or ten counties of the State. Even among the *bonâ fide* purchasers, on the Holland Purchase, this resistance has been organized,

and a species of troops raised, who appear disguised and armed wherever a levy is to be made. Several men have already been murdered, and there is the strong probability of a civil war."

"In the name of what is sacred and right, what has the government of the State been doing all this time?"

"In my poor judgment, a great deal that it ought not to have done, and very little that it ought. You know the state of politics at home, Hugh; how important New York is in all national questions, and how nearly tied is her vote —less than ten thousand majority in a canvass of near half a million of votes. When this is the case, the least-principled part of the voters attain an undue importance—a truth that has been abundantly illustrated in this question. The natural course would have been to raise an armed constabulary force, and to have kept it in motion, as the anti-renters have kept their 'Injins' in motion, which would have soon tired out the rebels, for rebels they are, who would thus have had to support one army in part, and the other altogether. Such a movement on the part of the State, well and energetically managed, would have drawn half the 'Injins' at once from the ranks of disaffection to those of

authority; for all that most of these men want is to live easy, and to have a parade of military movements. Instead of that, the legislature substantially did nothing, until blood was spilt, and the grievance had got to be not only profoundly disgraceful for such a State and such a country, but utterly intolerable to the well-affected of the revolted counties, as well as to those who were kept out of the enjoyment of their property. Then, indeed, it passed the law which ought to have been passed the first year of the 'Injin' system—a law which renders it felony to appear armed and disguised; but Dunning writes me this law is openly disregarded in Delaware and Schoharie, in particular, and that bodies of 'Injins,' in full costume and armed, of a thousand men, have appeared to prevent levies or sales. Where it will end, Heaven knows!"

"Do you apprehend any serious civil war?"

"It is impossible to say where false principles may lead, when they are permitted to make head and to become widely disseminated, in a country like ours. Still, the disturbances, as such, are utterly contemptible, and could and would be put down by an energetic executive in ten days after he had time to collect a force to

do it with. In some particulars, the present incumbent has behaved perfectly well; while in others, in my judgment, he has inflicted injuries on the right that it will require years to repair, if, indeed, they are ever repaired."

"You surprise me, sir; and this the more especially, as I know you are generally of the same way of thinking, on political subjects, with the party that is now in power."

"Did you ever know me to support what I conceived to be wrong, Hugh, on account of my political affinities?" asked my uncle, a little reproachfully as to manner. "But, let me tell you the harm that I conceive has been done by all the governors who have had anything to do with the subject; and that includes one of a party to which I am opposed, and two that are not. In the first place, they have all treated the matter as if the tenants had really some cause of complaint; when in truth all their griefs arise from the fact that other men will not let them have their property just as they may want it, and in some respects on their own terms."

"That is certainly a grief not to be maintained by reason in a civilized country, and in a Christian community."

"Umph! Christianity, like liberty, suffers fearfully in human hands; one is sometimes at a loss to recognise either. I have seen ministers of the gospel just as dogged, just as regardless of general morality, and just as indifferent to the right, in upholding *their* parties, as I ever saw laymen; and I have seen laymen manifesting tempers, in this respect, that properly belong to devils. But our governors have certainly treated this matter as if the tenants actually had griefs; when in truth their sole oppression is in being obliged to pay rents that are merely nominal, and in not being able to buy other men's property contrary to their wishes, and very much at their own prices. One governor has even been so generous as to volunteer a mode of settling disputes with which, by the way, he has no concern, there being courts to discharge that office, that is singularly presuming on his part, to say the least, and which looks a confounded sight more like aristocracy, or monarchy, than anything connected with leasehold tenure."

"Why, what can the man have done?"

"He has kindly taken on himself the office of doing that for which I fancy he can find no authority in the institutions, or in their spirit —no less than advising citizens how they may

conveniently manage their own affairs so as to get over difficulties that he himself substantially admits, while giving this very advice, are difficulties that the law sanctions!"

"This is a very extraordinary interference in a public functionary; because one of the parties to a contract that is solemnly guaranteed by the law, chooses to complain of its *nature*, rather than of its *conditions*, to pretend to throw the weight of his even assumed authority into the scales on either side of the question!"

"And that in a popular government, Hugh, in which it tells so strongly against a man to render him unpopular, that not one man in a million has the moral courage to resist public opinion, even when he is right. You have hit the nail on the head, boy; it is in the last degree presuming, and what would be denounced as tyrannical in any monarch in Europe. But he has lived in vain who has not learned that they who make the loudest professions of a love of liberty, have little knowledge of the quality, beyond submission to the demands of numbers. Our executive has carried his fatherly care even beyond this; he has actually suggested the terms of a bargain by which he thinks the difficulty can be settled, which, in

addition to the gross assumption of having a voice in a matter that in no manner belongs to him, has the palpable demerit of recommending a pecuniary compromise that is flagrantly wrong as a mere pecuniary compromise."

"You astonish me, sir! What is the precise nature of his recommendation?"

"That the Rensselaers should receive such a sum from each tenant as would produce an interest equal to the value of the present rent. Now, in the first place, here is a citizen who has got as much property as he wants, and who wishes to live for other purposes than to accumulate. This property is not only invested to his entire satisfaction, as regards convenience, security, and returns, but also in a way that is connected with some of the best sentiments of his nature. It is property that has descended to him through ancestors for two centuries; property that is historically connected with his name—on which he was born, on which he has lived, and on which he has hoped to die; property, in a word, that is associated with all the higher feelings of humanity. Because some interloper, perhaps, who has purchased an interest in one of his farms six months before, feels an *aristocratic* desire not to have a landlord,

and wishes to own a farm in fee, that in fact he has no other right to than he gets through his lease, the governor of the great State of New York throws the weight of his official position against the old hereditary owner of the soil, by solemnly suggesting, in an official document that is intended to produce an effect on public opinion, that he should sell that which he does not wish to sell, but wishes to keep, and that at a price which I conceive is much below its true pecuniary value. We have liberty with a vengeance, if these are some of its antics!"

"What makes the matter worse, is the fact that each of the Rensselaers has a house on his estate, so placed as to be convenient to look after his interests; which interests he is to be at the trouble of changing, leaving him his house on his hands, because, forsooth, one of the parties to a plain and equitable bargain wishes to make better conditions than he covenanted for. I wonder what his Excellency proposes that the landlords shall do with their money when they get it? Buy new estates, and build new houses, of which to be dispossessed when a new set of tenants may choose to cry out against aristocracy, and demonstrate

their own love for democracy by wishing to pull others down in order to shove themselves into their places?"

"You are right again, Hugh; but it is a besetting vice of America to regard life as all means, and as having no end in a worldly point of view. I dare say men may be found among us who regard it as highly presuming in any man to build himself an ample residence, and to announce by his mode of living that he is content with his present means, and does not wish to increase them, at the very moment they view the suggestions of the governor as the pink of modesty, and excessively favourable to equal rights! I like that thought of yours about the house, too; in order to suit the 'spirit' of the New York institutions, it would seem that a New York landlord should build on wheels, that he may move his abode to some new estate, when it suits the pleasure of his tenants to buy him out."

"Do you suppose the Rensselaers would take their money, the principal of the rent at seven per cent., and buy land with it, after their experience of the uncertainty of such possessions among us?"

"Not they," said my uncle Ro, laughing.

"No, no! they would sell the Manor-House, and Beverwyck, for taverns; and then any one might live in them who would pay the principal sum of the cost of a dinner; bag their dollars, and proceed forthwith to Wall-street, and commence the shaving of notes—that occupation having been decided, as I see by the late arrivals, to be highly honourable and praiseworthy. Hitherto they have been nothing but drones; but by the time they can go to the quick with their dollars, they will become useful members of society, and be honoured and esteemed accordingly."

What next might have been said I do not know, for just then we were interrupted by a visit from our common banker, and the discourse was necessarily changed.

CHAPTER III.

"O, when shall I visit the land of my birth,
The loveliest land on the face of the earth?
When shall I those scenes of affection explore,
Our forests, our fountains,
Our hamlets, our mountains,
With the pride of our mountains, the maid I adore?"

MONTGOMERY.

IT was truly news for an American, who had been so long cut off from intelligence from home, thus suddenly to be told that some of the scenes of the middle ages—scenes connected with real wrongs and gross abuses of human rights—were about to be enacted in his own land; that country which boasted itself, not only to be the asylum of the oppressed, but the conservator of the right. I was grieved at what I had heard, for, during my travels, I had cherished a much-loved image of justice and political excellence, that I now began to fear must be abandoned. My uncle and myself

decided at once to return home, a step that indeed was required by prudence. I was now of an age to enter into the full possession of my own property (so far as "new laws and new lords" would permit); and the letters received by my late guardian, as well as certain newspapers, communicated the unpleasant fact that a great many of the tenants of Ravensnest had joined the association, paid tribute for the support of "Injins," and were getting to be as bad as any of the rest of them, so far as designs and schemes to plunder were concerned, though they still paid their rents. The latter circumstance was ascribed by our agent to the fact that many leases were about to fall in, and it would be in my power to substitute more honest and better disposed successors for the present occupants of the several farms. Measures were taken accordingly for quitting Paris as soon as possible, so that we might reach home late in the month of May.

"If we had time, I would certainly throw in a memorial or two to the legislature," observed my uncle, a day or two before we proceeded to Havre to join the packet. "I have a strong desire to protest against the invasion of my rights as a freeman that is connected with some

of their contemplated laws. I do not at all like the idea of being abridged of the power of hiring a farm for the longest time I can obtain it, which is one of the projects of some of the ultra reformers of free and equal New York. It is wonderful, Hugh, into what follies men precipitate themselves as soon as they begin to run into exaggerations, whether of politics, religion, or tastes. Here are half of the exquisite philanthropists who see a great evil affecting the rights of human nature in one man's hiring a farm from another for as long a term as he can obtain it, who are at the very extreme in their opinions on free trade! So free-trade are some of the journals which think it a capital thing to prevent landlords and tenants from making their own bargains, that they have actually derided the idea of having established fares for hackney-coaches, but that it would be better to let the parties stand in the rain and higgle about the price, on the free-trade principle. Some of these men are either active agents in stimulating the legislature to rob the citizen of this very simple control of his property, or passive lookers-on while others do it."

"Votes, sir, votes."

"It is, indeed, votes, sir, votes; nothing

short of votes could reconcile these men to their own inconsistencies. As for yourself, Hugh, it might be well to get rid of that canopied pew——"

"Of what canopied pew? I am sure I do not understand you."

"Do you forget that the family-pew in St. Andrew's Church, at Ravensnest, has a wooden canopy over it—a relic of our colonial opinions and usages?"

"Now you mention it, I do remember a very clumsy, and, to own the truth, a very ugly thing, that I have always supposed was placed there, by those who built the church, by way of ornament."

"That ugly thing, by way of ornament, was intended for a sort of canopy, and was by no means an uncommon distinction in the State and colony, as recently as the close of the last century. The church was built at the expense of my grandfather, General Littlepage, and his bosom friend and kinsman, Colonel Dirck Follock, both good Whigs and gallant defenders of the liberty of their country. They thought it proper that the Littlepages should have a canopied pew, and that is the state in which they caused the building to be presented to my

father. The old work still stands; and Dunning writes me that, among the other arguments used against your interests, is the fact that your pew is thus distinguished from those of the rest of the congregation."

"It is a distinction no man would envy me, could it be known that I have ever thought the clumsy, ill-shaped thing a nuisance, and detestable as an ornament. I have never even associated it in my mind with personal distinction, but have always supposed it was erected with a view to embellish the building, and placed over our pew as the spot where such an excrescence would excite the least envy."

"In all that, with one exception, you have judged quite naturally. Forty years ago, such a thing might have been done, and a majority of the parishioners would have seen in it nothing out of place. But that day has gone by; and you will discover that, on your own estate, and in the very things created by your family and yourself, you will actually have fewer rights of any sort, beyond those your money will purchase, than any man around you. The simple fact that St. Andrew's Church was built by your great-grandfather, and by him presented to the congregation, will diminish your claim to

have a voice in its affairs with many of the congregation."

"This is so extraordinary, that I must ask the reason."

"The reason is connected with a principle so obviously belonging to human nature generally, and to American nature in particular, that I wonder you ask it. It is envy. Did that pew belong to the Newcomes, for instance, no one would think anything of it."

"Nevertheless, the Newcomes would make themselves ridiculous by sitting in a pew that was distinguished from those of their neighbours. The absurdity of the contrast would strike every one."

"And it is precisely because the absurdity does not exist in your case, that your seat is envied. No one envies absurdity. However, you will readily admit, Hugh, that a church, and a churchyard, are the two last places in which human distinctions ought to be exhibited. All are equal in the eyes of Him we go to the one to worship, and all are equal in the grave. I have ever been averse to everything like worldly distinction in a congregation, and admire the usage of the Romish Church in even dispensing with pews altogether. Monu-

ments speak to the world, and have a general connexion with history, so that they may be tolerated to a certain point, though notorious liars."

"I agree with you, sir, as to the unfitness of a church for all distinctions, and shall be happy on every account to get rid of my canopy, though that has an historical connexion, also. I am quite innocent of any feeling of pride while sitting under it, though I will confess to some of shame at its quizzical shape, when I see it has attracted the eyes of intelligent strangers."

"It is but natural that you should feel thus; for, while we may miss distinctions and luxuries to which we have ever been accustomed, they rarely excite pride in the possessor, even while they awaken envy in the looker-on."

"Nevertheless, I cannot see what the old pew has to do with the rents, or my legal rights."

"When a cause is bad, everything is pressed into it that it is believed may serve a turn. No man who had a good legal claim for property, would ever think of urging any other; nor would any legislator who had sound and sufficient reasons for his measures—reasons that

could properly justify him before God and man for his laws—have recourse to slang to sustain him. If these anti-renters were right, they would have no need of secret combinations, of disguises, blood-and-thunder names, and special agents in the legislature of the land. The right requires no false aid to make it appear the right; but the wrong must get such support as it can press into its service. Your pew is called aristocratic, though it confers no political power; it is called a patent of nobility, though it neither gives nor takes away; and it is hated, and you with it, for the very reason that you can sit in it and not make yourself ridiculous. I suppose you have not examined very closely the papers I gave you to read?"

"Enough so to ascertain that they are filled with trash."

"Worse than trash, Hugh; with some of the loosest principles, and most atrocious feelings, that degrade poor human nature. Some of the reformers propose that no man shall hold more than a thousand acres of land, while others lay down the very intelligible and distinct principle that no man ought to hold more than he can use. Even petitions to that effect, I have been told, have been sent to the legislature."

"Which has taken care not to allude to their purport, either in debate or otherwise, as I see nothing to that effect in the reports."

"Ay, I dare say the slang-whangers of those honourable bodies will studiously keep all such enormities out of sight, as some of them doubtless hope to step into the shoes of the present landlords, as soon as they can get the feet out of them which are now in. But these are the projects and the petitions in the columns of the journals, and they speak for themselves. Among other things, they say it is nobility to be a landlord."

"I see by the letter of Mr. Dunning, that they have petitioned the legislature to order an inquiry into my title. Now we hold from the crown——"

"So much the worse, Hugh. Faugh! hold from a crown in a republican country! I am amazed you are not ashamed to own it. Do you not know, boy, that it has been gravely contended in a court of justice that, in obtaining our national independence from the King of Great Britain, the people conquered all his previous grants, which ought to be declared void and of none effect?"

"That is an absurdity of which I had not

heard," I answered, laughing; "why the people of New York, who held all their lands under the crown, would in that case have been conquering them for other persons! My good grandfather and great-grandfather, both of whom actually fought and bled in the revolution, must have been very silly thus to expose themselves, to take away their own estates, in order to give them to a set of immigrants from New England and other parts of the world!"

"Quite justly said, Hugh," added my uncle, joining in the laugh. "Nor is this half of the argument. The State, too, in its corporate character, has been playing swindler all this time. You may not know the fact, but I as your guardian do know, that the quit-rents reserved by the crown when it granted the lands of Mooseridge and Ravensnest, were claimed by the State; and that, wanting money to save the people from taxes, it commuted with us, receiving a certain gross sum in satisfaction of all future claims."

"Ay, *that* I did not know. Can the fact be shown?"

"Certainly—it is well known to all old fellows like myself, for it was a very general measure, and very generally entered into by all the

landholders. In our case, the receipts are still to be found among the family-papers. In the cases of the older estates, such as those of the Van Rensselaers, the equity is still stronger in their favour, since the conditions to hold the land included an obligation to bring so many settlers from Europe within a given time; conditions that were fulfilled at great cost, as you may suppose, and on which, in truth, the colony had its foundation."

"How much it tells against a people's honesty to wish to forget such facts, in a case like this!"

"There is nothing forgotten, for the facts were probably never known to those who prate about the conquered rights from the crown. As you say, however, the civilization of a community is to be measured by its consciousness of the existence of all principles of justice, and a familiarity with its own history. The great bulk of the population of New York have no active desire to invade what is right in this anti-rent struggle, having no direct interests at stake; *their* crime is a passive inactivity, which allows those who are either working for political advancement, or those who are working to obtain other men's property, to make use of them, through their own laws."

"But is it not an embarrassment to such a region as that directly around Albany, to have such tenures to the land, and for so large a body of people to be compelled to pay rent, in the very heart of the State, as it might be, and in situations that render it desirable to leave enterprise as unshackled as possible?"

"I am not prepared to admit this much, even, as a general principle. One argument used by these anti-renters is, for instance, that the patroons, in their leases, reserved the mill-seats. Now, what if they did? Some one must own the mill-seats; and why not the patroon as well as another? To give the argument any weight, not as law, not as morals, but as mere expediency, it must be shown that the patroons would not let these mill-seats at as low rents as any one else; and my opinion is that they would let them at rents of not half the amount that would be asked, were they the property of so many individuals, scattered up and down the country. But, admitting that so large an estate of this particular sort has some inconveniences in that particular spot, can there be two opinions among men of integrity about the mode of getting rid of it? Everything has its price, and, in a business sense, everything is

entitled to its price.—No people acknowledge this more than the Americans, or practise on it so extensively. Let the Rensselaers be tempted by such offers as will induce them to sell, but do not let them be invaded by that most infernal of all acts of oppression, special legislation, in order to bully or frighten them from the enjoyment of what is rightfully their own. If the State think such a description of property injurious in its heart, let the State imitate England in her conduct towards the slave-holders—*buy* them out; not *tax* them out, and *wrong* them out, and *annoy* them out. But, Hugh, enough of this at present: we shall have much more than we want of it when we get home. Among my letters, I have one from each of my other wards."

"'Still harping on my daughter,' sir!" I answered, laughing. "I hope that the vivacious Miss Henrietta Coldbrook, and the meek Miss Anne Marston, are both perfectly well?"

"Both in excellent health, and both write charmingly. I must really let you see the letter of Henrietta, as I do think it is quite creditable to her: I will step into my room and get it."

I ought to let the reader into a secret here

that will have some connexion with what is to follow. A dead-set had been made at me, previously to leaving home, to induce me to marry either of three young ladies—Miss Henrietta Coldbrooke, Miss Anne Marston, and Miss Opportunity Newcome. The advances in the cases of Miss Henrietta Coldbrooke and Miss Anne Marston came from my uncle Ro, who, as their guardian, had a natural interest in their making what he was pleased to think might be a good connexion for either; while the advances on account of Miss Opportunity Newcome came from herself. Under such circumstances, it may be well to say who these young ladies actually were.

Miss Henrietta Coldbrooke was the daughter of an Englishman of good family, and some estate, who had emigrated to America and married, under the impulse of certain theories in politics which induced him to imagine that this was the promised land. I remember him as a dissappointed and dissatisfied widower, who was thought to be daily growing poorer under the consequences of indiscreet investments, and who at last got to be so very English in his wishes and longings, as to assert that the common Muscovy was a better bird than the canvas-

back! He died, however, in time to leave his only child an estate which, under my uncle's excellent management, was known by me to be rather more than one hundred and seventy-nine thousand dollars, and which produced a nett eight thousand a-year. This made Miss Henrietta a belle at once; but, having a prudent friend in my grandmother, as yet she had not married a beggar. I knew that uncle Ro went quite as far as was proper, in his letters, in the way of hints touching myself; and my dear, excellent, honest-hearted, straightforward old grandmother had once let fall an expression in one of her letters to myself, which induced me to think that these hints had actually awakened as much interest in the young lady's bosom, as could well be connected with what was necessarily nothing but curiosity.

Miss Anne Marston was also an heiress, but on a very diminished scale. She had rather more than three thousand a-year in buildings in town, and a pretty little sum of about sixteen thousand dollars laid by out of its savings. She was not an only child, however, having two brothers, each of whom had already received as much as the sister, and each of whom, as is very apt to be the case with the heirs of New York

merchants, was already in a fair way of getting rid of his portion in riotous living. Nothing does a young American so much good, under such circumstances, as to induce him to travel. It makes or breaks at once. If a downright fool, he is plucked by European adventurers in so short a time, that the agony is soon over. If only vain and frivolous, because young and ill-educated, the latter being a New York endemic, but with some foundation of native mind, he lets his whiskers grow, becomes fuzzy about the chin, dresses better, gets to be much better mannered, soon loses his taste for the low and vulgar indulgences of his youth, and comes out such a gentleman as one can only make who has entirely thrown away the precious moments of youth. If tolerably educated in boyhood, with capacity to build on, the chances are that the scales will fall from his eyes very fast on landing in the old world—that his ideas and tastes will take a new turn—that he will become what nature intended him for, an intellectual man; and that he will finally return home, conscious alike of the evils and blessings, the advantages and disadvantages, of his own system and country—a wiser, and it is to be hoped a better man. How the

experiment had succeeded with the Marstons, neither myself nor my uncle knew; for they had paid their visit while we were in the East, and had already returned to America. As for Miss Anne, she had a mother to take care of her mind and person, though I had learned she was pretty, sensible, and discreet.

Miss Opportunity Newcome was a belle of Ravensnest, a village on my own property; a rural beauty, and of rural education, virtues, manners, and habits. As Ravensnest was not particularly advanced in civilization, or, to make use of the common language of the country, was not a very "aristocratic place," I shall not dwell on her accomplishments, which did well enough for Ravensnest, but would not essentially ornament my manuscript.

Opportunity was the daughter of Ovid, who was the son of Jason, of the house of Newcome. In using the term "house," I adopt it understandingly; for the family had dwelt in the same tenement, a leasehold property of which the fee was in myself, and the dwelling had been associated with the name of Newcome from time immemorial; that is, for about eighty years. All that time had a Newcome been the tenant of the mill, tavern, store, and farm, that

lay nearest the village of Ravensnest, or Little Nest, as it was commonly called; and it may not be impertinent to the moral of my narrative if I add that, for all that time, and for something longer, had I and my ancestors been the landlords. I beg the reader to bear this last fact in mind, as there will soon be occasion to show that there was a strong disposition in certain persons to forget it.

As I have said, Opportunity was the daughter of Ovid. There was also a brother, who was named Seneca, or Sene*ky*, as he always pronounced it himself, the son of Ovid, the son of Jason, the first of the name at Ravensnest. This Seneca was a lawyer, in the sense of a license granted by the Justices of the Supreme Court, as well as by the Court of Common Pleas, in and for the county of Washington. As there had been a sort of hereditary education among the Newcomes for three generations, beginning with Jason, and ending with Seneca; and, as the latter was at the bar, I had occasionally been thrown into the society of both brother and sister. The latter, indeed, used to be fond of visiting the Nest, as my house was familiarly called, Ravensnest being its true name, whence those of the "patent" and village; and, as Op-

portunity had early manifested a partiality for my dear old grandmother, and not less dear young sister, who occasionally passed a few weeks with me during the vacations, more especially in the autumns, I had many occasions of being brought within the influence of her charms—opportunities that, I feel bound to state, Opportunity did not neglect. I have understood that her mother, who bore the same name, had taught Ovid the art of love by a very similar demonstration, and had triumphed. That lady was still living, and may be termed Opportunity the Great, while the daughter can be styled Opportunity the Less. There was very little difference between my own years and those of the young lady; and, as I had last passed through the fiery ordeal at the sinister age of twenty, there was not much danger in encountering the risk anew, now I was five years older. But I must return to my uncle and the letter of Miss Henrietta Coldbrooke.

"Here it is, Hugh," cried my guardian, gaily; "and a capital letter it is! I wish I could read the whole of it to you; but the two girls made me promise never to show their letters to any one, which could mean only you, before they would promise to write anything to me beyond

common-places. Now, I get their sentiments freely and naturally, and the correspondence is a source of much pleasure to me. I think, however, I might venture just to give you one extract."

"You had better not, sir; there would be a sort of treachery in it, that I confess I would rather not be accessary to. If Miss Coldbrooke do not wish me to read what she writes, she can hardly wish that you should read any of it to me."

Uncle Ro glanced at me, and I fancied he seemed dissatisfied with my *nonchalance*. He read the letter through to himself, however, laughing here, smiling there, then muttering "capital!" "good!" "charming girl!" "worthy of Hannah More!" &c. &c., as if just to provoke my curiosity. But I had no desire to read "Hannah More," as any young fellow of five-and-twenty can very well imagine, and I stood it all with the indifference of a stoic. My guardian had to knock under, and put the letters in his writing-desk.

"Well, the girls will be glad to see us," he said, after a moment of reflection, "and not a little surprised. In my very last letter to my mother, I sent them word that we should not

be home until October; and now we shall see them as early as June, at least."

"Patt will be delighted, I make no doubt. As for the other two young ladies, they have so many friends and relations to care for, that I fancy our movements give them no great concern."

"Then you do both injustice, as their letters would prove. They take the liveliest interest in our proceedings, and speak of my return as if they look for it with the greatest expectation and joy."

I made my uncle Ro a somewhat saucy answer; but fair dealing compels me to record it.

"I dare say they do, sir," was my reply; "but what young lady does not look with '*expectation* and joy' for the return of a friend, who is known to have a long purse, from Paris!"

"Well, Hugh, you deserve neither of those dear girls; and, if I can help it, you shall have neither."

"Thank 'ee, sir!"

"Poh! this is worse than silly—it is rude. I dare say neither would accept you, were you to offer to-morrow."

"I trust not, sir, for her own sake. It

would be a singularly palpable demonstration were either to accept a man she barely knew, and whom she had not seen since she was fifteen."

Uncle Ro laughed, but I could see he was confoundedly vexed; and, as I loved him with all my heart, though I did not love match-making, I turned the discourse, in a pleasant way, on our approaching departure.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Hugh," cried my uncle, who was a good deal of a boy in some things, for the reason, I suppose, that he was an old bachelor; "I'll just have wrong names entered on board the packet, and we'll surprise all our friends. Neither Jacob nor your man will betray us, we know; and, for that matter, we can send them both home by the way of England. Each of us has trunks in London to be looked after, and let the two fellows go by the way of Liverpool. That is a good thought, and occurred most happily."

"With all my heart, sir. My fellow is of no more use to me at sea than an automaton would be, and I shall be glad to get rid of his rueful countenance. He is a capital servant on terrâ firma, but a perfect Niobe on the briny main."

The thing was agreed on; and, a day or two afterwards, both our body-servants, that is to say, Jacob the black and Hubert the German, were on their way to England. My uncle let his apartment again, for he always maintained I should wish to bring my bride to pass a winter in it; and we proceeded to Havre in a sort of incognito. There was little danger of our being known on board the packet, and we had previously ascertained that there was not an acquaintance of either in the ship. There was a strong family resemblance between my uncle and myself, and we passed for father and son in the ship, as old Mr. Davidson and young Mr. Davidson, of Maryland—or Myr-r-land, as it is Doric to call that State. We had no concern in this part of the deception, unless abstaining from calling my supposed father "uncle," as one would naturally do in strange society, can be considered.

The passage itself—by the way, I wish all landsmen would be as accurate as I am here, and understand that a "voyage" means "out" and "home," or "thence" and "back again," while a "passage" means from place to place—but our passage was pregnant with no events worth recording. We had the usual amount of

good and bad weather, the usual amount of eating and drinking, and the usual amount of ennui. The latter circumstance, perhaps, contributed to the digesting of a further scheme of my uncle's, which it is now necessary to state.

A re-perusal of his letters and papers had induced him to think the anti-rent movement a thing of more gravity, even, than he had first supposed. The combination on the part of the tenants, we learned also from an intelligent New Yorker who was a fellow-passenger, extended much further than our accounts had given us reason to believe; and it was deemed decidedly dangerous for landlords, in many cases, to be seen on their own estates. Insult, personal degradation, or injury, and even death, it was thought, might be the consequences, in many cases. The blood actually spilled had had the effect to check the more violent demonstrations, it is true; but the latent determination to achieve their purposes was easily to be traced among the tenants, in the face of all their tardy professions of moderation, and a desire for nothing but what was right. In this case, what was right was the letter and spirit of the contracts; and nothing was plainer than the fact that these were not what was wanted.

Professions pass for nothing, with the experienced, when connected with a practice that flatly contradicts them. It was only too apparent to all who chose to look into the matter, and that by evidence which could not mislead, that the great body of the tenants in various counties of New York were bent on obtaining interests in their farms that were not conveyed by their leases, without the consent of their landlords, and insomuch that they were bent on doing that which should be discountenanced by every honest man in the community. The very fact that they supported, or in any manner connived at, the so-called "Injin" system, spoke all that was necessary as to their motives; and, when we come to consider that these "Injins" had already proceeded to the extremity of shedding blood, it was sufficiently plain that things must soon reach a crisis.

My uncle Roger and myself reflected on all these matters calmly, and decided on our course, I trust, with prudence. As that decision has proved to be pregnant with consequences that are likely to affect my future life, I shall now briefly give an outline of what induced us to adopt it.

It was all-important for us to visit Ravensnest in person, while it might be hazardous to do so

openly. The Nest-house stood in the very centre of the estate, and, ignorant as we were of the temper of the tenants, it might be indiscreet to let our presence be known; and circumstances favoured our projects of concealment. We were not expected to reach the country at all until autumn, or "fall," as that season of the year is poetically called in America; and this gave us the means of reaching the property unexpectedly, and, as we hoped, undetected. Our arrangement, then, was very simple, and will be best related in the course of the narrative.

The packet had a reasonably short passage, as we were twenty-nine days from land to land. It was on a pleasant afternoon in May when the hummock-like heights of Navesink were first seen from the deck; and, an hour later, we came in sight of the tower-resembling sails of the coasters which were congregating in the neighbourhood of the low point of land that is so very appropriately called *Sandy* Hook. The light-houses rose out of the water soon after, and objects on the shore of New Jersey next came gradually out of the misty back-ground, until we got near enough to be boarded, first by the pilot, and next by the news-boat; the first preceding the last for a wonder, news

usually being far more active, in this good republic, than watchfulness to prevent evil. My uncle Ro gave the crew of this news-boat a thorough scrutiny, and, finding no one on board her whom he had ever before seen, he bargained for a passage up to town.

We put our feet on the Battery just as the clocks of New York were striking eight. A custom-house officer had examined our carpet-bags and permitted them to pass, and we had disburthened ourselves of the effects in the ship, by desiring the captain to attend to them. Each of us had a town-house, but neither would go near his dwelling; mine being only kept up in winter, for the use of my sister and an aunt who kindly took charge of her during the season, while my uncle's was opened principally for his mother. At that season, we had reason to think neither was tenanted but by one or two old family servants; and it was our cue also to avoid them. But "Jack Dunning," as my uncle always called him, was rather more of a friend than of an agent; and he had a bachelor establishment in Chamber-street that was precisely the place we wanted. Thither, then, we proceeded, taking the route by Greenwich-street, fearful of meeting some one in Broadway by whom we might be recognised.

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CHAPTER IV.

Cit. Speak, speak!

1 *Cit.* You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?

Cit. Resolved, resolved.

1 *Cit.* First you know, Caius Marcus is chief enemy to the people.

Cit. We know't, we know't.

1 *Cit.* Let's kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?

Coriolanus.

THE most inveterate Manhattanese, if he be anything of a man of the world, must confess that New York is, after all, but a Rag-Fair sort of a place, so far as the eye is concerned. I was particularly struck with this fact, even at that hour, as we went stumbling along over an atrociously bad side-walk, my eyes never at rest, as any one can imagine, after five years of absence. I could not help noting the incongruities; the dwellings of marble, in close proximity with miserable, low constructions in wood; the wretched pavements, and, above all, the

country air, of a town of near four hundred thousand souls. I very well know that many of the defects are to be ascribed to the rapid growth of the place, which gives it a sort of hobbledehoy look; but, being a Manhattanese by birth, I thought I might just as well own it all, at once, if it were only for the information of a particular portion of my townsmen, who may have been under a certain delusion on the subject. As for comparing the Bay of New York with that of Naples on the score of beauty, I shall no more be guilty of any such folly, to gratify the cockney feelings of Broadway and Bond-street, than I should be guilty of the folly of comparing the commerce of the ancient Parthenope with that of *old* New York, in order to excite complacency in the bosom of some bottegajo in the Toledo, or on the Chiaja. Our fast-growing Manhattan is a great town in its way—a wonderful place—without a parallel, I do believe, on earth, as a proof of enterprise and of the accumulation of business; and it is not easy to make such a town appear ridiculous by any jibes and inuendoes that relate to the positive things of this world, though nothing is easier than to do it for itself by setting up to belong to the sisterhood of such places as

London, Paris, Vienna and St. Petersburg. There is too much of the American notion of the omnipotence of numbers among us Manhattanese, which induces us to think that the higher rank in the scale of places is to be obtained by majorities. No, no; let us remember the familiar axiom of "ne sutor ultra crepidum." New York is just the queen of "business," but not yet the queen of the world. Every man who travels ought to bring back something to the common stock of knowledge; and I shall give a hint to my townsmen, by which I really think they may be able to tell for themselves, as by feeling a sort of moral pulse, when the town is rising to the level of a capital. When simplicity takes the place of pretension, is one good rule; but, as it may require a good deal of practice, or native taste, to ascertain this fact, I will give another that is obvious to the senses, which will at least be strongly symptomatic; and that is this: When *squares* cease to be called *parks*; when horse-bazaars and fashionable streets are not called Tattersalls and Bond-street; when *Washington* Market is rechristened *Bear* Market, and Franklin and Fulton and other great philosophers and inventors are plucked of the unmerited honours of having shambles

named after them; when *commercial* is not used as a prefix to emporium; when people can return from abroad without being asked "if they are reconciled to their country," and strangers are not interrogated at the second question, "how do you like *our city?*" then may it be believed that the town is beginning to go alone, and that it may set up for itself.

Although New York is, out of all question, decidedly provincial, labouring under the peculiar vices of provincial habits and provincial modes of thinking, it contains many a man of the world, and some, too, who have never quitted their own firesides. Of this very number was the Jack Dunning, as my uncle Ro called him, to whose house in Chamber-street we were now proceeding.

"If we were going anywhere but to Dunning's," said my uncle, as we turned out of Greenwich-street, "I should have no fear of being recognised by the servants; for no one here thinks of keeping a man six months. Dunning, however, is of the old school, and does not like new faces; so he will have no Irishman at his door, as is the case with two out of three of the houses at which one calls, now-a-days."

In another minute we were at the bottom of Mr. Dunning's "stoup"—what an infernal contrivance it is to get in and out at the door by, in a hotty-cold climate like ours!—but, there we were, and I observed that my uncle hesitated.

"*Parlez au* SUISSE," said I; "ten to one he is fresh from some Bally-this, or Bally-that."

"No, no; it must be old Garry the nigger"—my uncle Ro was of the old school himself, and *would* say "nigger"—"Jack can never have parted with Garry."

"Garry" was the diminutive of Garret, a somewhat common Dutch christian name among us.

We rang, and the door opened—in about five minutes. Although the terms "aristocrat" and "aristocracy" are much in men's mouths in America just now, as well as those of "feudal" and the "middle ages," and this, too, as applied to modes of living as well as to leasehold tenures, there is but one porter in the whole country; and he belongs to the White House, at Washington. I am afraid even that personage, royal porter as he is, is often out of the way; and the reception he gives when he *is* there, is not of the most brilliant and princely

character. When we had waited three minutes, my uncle Ro said—

"I am afraid Garry is taking a nap by the kitchen-fire; I'll try him again."

Uncle Ro did try again, and, two minutes later, the door opened.

"What is your pleasure?" demanded the *Suisse*, with a strong brogue.

My uncle started back as if he had met a sprite; but he asked if Mr. Dunning was at home.

"He is, indeed, sir."

"Is he alone, or is he with company?"

"He is, indeed."

"But *what* is he, indeed?"

"He is *that*."

"Can you take the trouble to explain which *that* it is? Has he company, or is he alone?"

"Just *that*, sir. Walk in, and he'll be charmed to see you. A fine gentleman is his honour, and pleasure it is to live with him, I'm sure!"

"How long is it since you left Ireland, my friend?"

"Isn't it a mighty bit, now, yer honour!" answered Barney, closing the door. "T'irteen weeks, if it's one day."

"Well, go ahead, and show us the way. This is a bad omen, Hugh, to find that Jack Dunning, of all men in the country, should have changed his servant—good, quiet, lazy, respectable, old, grey-headed Garry the nigger. —for such a bog-trotter as that fellow, who climbs those stairs as if accustomed only to ladders."

Dunning was in his library on the second floor, where he passed most of his evenings. His surprise was equal to that which my uncle had just experienced, when he saw us two standing before him. A significant gesture, however, caused him to grasp his friend and client's hand in silence; and nothing was said until the *Swiss* had left the room, although the fellow stood with the door in his hand a most inconvenient time, just to listen to what might pass between the host and his guests. At length we got rid of him, honest, well-meaning fellow that he was, after all; and the door was closed.

"My last letters have brought you home, Roger?" said Jack, the moment he *could* speak; for feeling, as well as caution, had something to do with his silence.

"They have, indeed. A great change must have come over the country, by what I hear;

and one of the very worst symptoms is that you have turned away Garry, and got an Irishman in his place."

"Ah! old men must die, as well as old principles, I find. My poor fellow went off in a fit last week, and I took that Irishman as a *pis aller*. After losing poor Garry, who was born a slave in my father's house, I became indifferent, and accepted the first comer from the intelligence office."

"We must be careful, Dunning, not to give up too soon. But hear my story, and then to other matters."

My uncle then explained his wish to be incognito, and his motive. Dunning listened attentively, but seemed uncertain whether to dissent or approve. The matter was discussed briefly, and then it was postponed for further consideration.

"But how comes on this great moral dereliction, called anti-rentism? Is it on the wane, or the increase?"

"On the wane, to the eye, perhaps; but on the increase, so far as principles, the right, and facts, are concerned. The necessity of propitiating votes is tempting politicians of all sides to lend themselves to it; and there is

imminent danger now that atrocious wrongs will be committed under the form of law."

"In what way *can* the law touch an existing contract? The Supreme Court of the United States will set that right."

"That is the only hope of the honest, let me tell you. It is folly to expect that a body composed of such men as usually are sent to the State Legislature, can resist the temptation to gain power by conciliating numbers. *That is out of the question.* Individuals of these bodies may resist; but the tendency there will be as against the few, and in favour of the many, bolstering their theories by clap-traps and slang political phrases. The scheme to tax the rents, under the name of quit-rents, will be resorted to, in the first place."

"That will be a most iniquitous proceeding, and would justify resistance just as much as our ancestors were justified in resisting the taxation of Great Britain."

"It would more so, for here we have a written covenant to render taxation equal. The landlord already pays one tax on each of these farms—a full and complete tax, that is reserved from the rent in the original bargain with the tenant; and now the wish is to tax the rents

themselves; and this not to raise revenue, for that is confessedly not wanted, but most clearly with a design to increase the inducements for the landlords to part with their property. If that can be done, the sales will be made on the principle that none but the tenant must be, as indeed no one else *can* be, the purchaser; and then we shall see a queer exhibition—men parting with their property under the pressure of a clamour that is backed by as much law as can be pressed into its service, with a monopoly of price on the side of the purchaser, and all in a country professing the most sensitive love of liberty, and where the prevailing class of politicians are free-trade men!"

"There is no end of these inconsistencies among politicians."

"There is no end of knavery when men submit to 'noses,' instead of principles. Call things by their right names, Ro, as they deserve to be. This matter is so plain, that he who runs can read."

"But will this scheme of taxation succeed? It does not affect us, for instance, as our leases are for three lives."

"Oh! that is nothing; for you they contemplate a law that will forbid the letting of

land, for the future, for a period longer than five years. Hugh's leases will soon be falling in, and then he can't make a slave of any man for a longer period than five years."

"Surely no one is so silly as to think of passing such a law, with a view to put down aristocracy, and to benefit the tenant!" I cried, laughing.

"Ay, you may laugh, young sir," resumed Jack Dunning; "but such *is* the intention. I know very well what will be your course of reasoning; you will say the longer the lease, the better for the tenant, if the bargain be reasonably good; and landlords cannot ask more for the use of their lands than they are really worth in this country, there happening to be more land than there are men to work it. No, no; landlords rather get less for their lands than they are worth, instead of more, for that plain reason. To compel the tenant to take a lease, therefore, for a term as short as five years, is to injure him, you think; to place him more at the control of his landlord, through the little interests connected with the cost and trouble of moving, and through the natural desire he may possess to cut the meadows he has seeded, and to get the full benefit of manure he has made and

carted. I see how you reason, young sir; but you are behind the age—you are sadly behind the age."

"The age is a queer one, if I am! All over the world it is believed that long leases are favours, or advantages, to tenants; and nothing can make it otherwise, *cæteris paribus*. Then what good will the tax do, after violating right and moral justice, if not positive law, to lay it? On a hundred dollars of rent, I should have to pay some fifty-five cents of taxes, as I am assessed on other things at Ravensnest; and does anybody suppose I will give up an estate that has passed through five generations of my family, on account of a tribute like that!"

"Mighty well, sir—mighty well, sir! This is fine talk; but I would advise you not to speak of *your* ancestors, at all. Landlords can't name *their* ancestors with impunity just now."

"I name mine only as showing a reason for a natural regard for my paternal acres."

"That you might do, if you were a tenant; but not as a landlord. In a landlord, it is aristocratic and intolerable pride, and to the last degree offensive—as Dogberry says, 'tolerable and not to be endured.'"

"But it is a *fact*, and it is natural one should have some feelings connected with it."

"The more it is a fact, the less it will be liked. People associate social position with wealth and *estates*, but not with farms; and the longer one has such things in a family, the worse for them!"

"I do believe, Jack," put in my uncle Ro, "that the rule which prevails all over the rest of the world is reversed here, and that with us it is thought a family's claim is lessened, and not increased, by time."

"To be sure it is!" answered Dunning, without giving me a chance to speak. "Do you know that you wrote me a very silly letter once, from Switzerland, about a family called de Blonay, that had been seated on the same rock, in a little castle, some six or eight hundred years, and the sort of respect and veneration the circumstance awakened? Well, all that was very foolish, as you will find when you pay your incognito visit to Ravensnest. I will not anticipate the result of your schooling; but, go to school."

"As the Rensselaers and other great landlords, who have estates on durable leases, will not be very likely to give them up, except on

terms that will suit themselves, for a tax as insignificant as that mentioned by Hugh," said my uncle, "what does the legislature anticipate from passing the law?"

"That its members will be called the friends of the people, and not the friends of the landlords. Would any man tax his friends, if he could help it?"

"But what will that portion of the people who compose the anti-renters gain by such a measure?"

"Nothing; and their complaints will be just as loud, and their longings as active as ever. Nothing that can have any effect on what they wish, will be accomplished by any legislation in the matter. One committee of the assembly has actually reported, you may remember, that the State might assume the lands, and sell them to the tenants, or some one else; or something of the sort."

"The constitution of the United States must be Hugh's ægis."

"And that alone will protect him, let me tell you. But for that noble provision of the constitution of the Federal Government, his estate would infallibly go for one-half its true value. There is no use in mincing things, or

in affecting to believe men more honest than they are—AN INFERNAL FEELING OF SELFISHNESS IS SO MUCH TALKED OF, AND CITED, AND REFERRED TO, ON ALL OCCASIONS, IN THIS COUNTRY, THAT A MAN ALMOST RENDERS HIMSELF RIDICULOUS WHO APPEARS TO REST ON PRINCIPLE."

"Have you heard what the tenants of Ravensnest aim at in particular?"

"They want to get Hugh's lands, that's all; nothing more, I can assure you."

"On what conditions, pray?" demanded I.

"As you 'light of chaps,' to use a saying of their own. Some even profess a willingness to pay a fair price."

"But I do not wish to sell for even a fair price. I have no desire to part with property that is endeared to me by family feeling and association. I have an expensive house and establishment on my estate, which obtains its principal value from the circumstance that it is so placed that I can look after my interests with the least inconvenience to myself. What can I do with the money but buy another estate? and I prefer this that I have."

"Poh! boy, you can shave notes, you'll recollect," said uncle Ro, drily. "The calling

is decided to be honourable by the highest tribunal; and no man should be above his business."

"You have no right, sir, in a free country," returned the caustic Jack Dunning, "to prefer one estate to another, more especially when other people want it. Your lands are leased to honest hard-working tenants, who can eat their dinners without silver forks, and whose ancestors——"

"Stop!" I cried, laughing; "I bar all ancestry. No man has a right to ancestry in a free country, you'll remember!"

"That means landlord-ancestry; as for tenant-ancestry, one can have a pedigree as long as the Maison de Levis. No, sir; every tenant you have has every right to demand that his sentiment of family feeling should be respected. His father planted that orchard, and he loves the apples better than any other apples in the world——"

"And my father procured the grafts, and made him a present of them."

"His grandfather cleared that field, and converted its ashes into pots and pearls——"

"And *my* grandfather received that year ten shillings of rent, for land off which his

received two hundred and fifty dollars for his ashes."

"His great-grandfather, honest and excellent man—nay, super-honest and confiding creature—first 'took up' the land when a wilderness, and with his own hands felled the timber, and sowed the wheat."

"And got his pay twenty-fold for it all, or he would not have been fool enough to do it. I had a great-grandfather, too; and I hope it will not be considered aristocratic if I venture to hint as much. He—a dishonest pestilent knave, no doubt—leased that very lot for six years without any rent at all, in order that the 'poor, confiding creature' might make himself comfortable, before he commenced paying his sixpence or shilling an acre rent for the remainder of three lives, with a moral certainty of getting a renewal on the most liberal terms known to a new country; and who knew, the whole time, he could buy land in fee, within ten miles of his door, but who thought *this* a better bargain than *that*."

"Enough of this folly," cried uncle Ro, joining in the laugh; "we all know that, in our excellent America, he who has the highest claims to anything, must affect to have the

least, to stifle the monster envy; and, being of one mind as to principles, let us come to facts. What of the girls, Jack, and of my honoured mother?"

"She, noble, heroic woman! she is at Ravensnest at this moment; and, as the girls would not permit her to go alone, they are all with her."

"And did you, Jack Dunning, suffer them to go unattended into a part of the country that is in open rebellion?" demanded my uncle, reproachfully.

"Come, come! Hodge Littlepage, this is very sublime as a theory, but not so clear when reduced to practice. I did not go with Mrs. Littlepage and her young fry, for the good and substantial reason that I did not wish to be 'tarred and feathered.'"

"So you leave them to run the risk of being 'tarred and feathered' in your stead?"

"Say what you will about the cant of freedom that is becoming so common among us, and from which we were once so free; say what you will, Ro, of the inconsistency of those who raise the cry of 'feudality,' and 'aristocracy,' and 'nobility,' at the very moment they are manifesting a desire for exclusive rights and

privileges in their own persons; say what you will of dishonesty, envy, that prominent American vice, knavery, covetousness, and selfishness; and I will echo all you can utter; —but do not say that a woman can be in serious danger among any material body of Americans, even if anti-renters, and mock-redskins in the bargain."

"I believe you are right there, Jack, on reflection. Pardon my warmth; but I have lately been living in the old world, and in a country in which women were not long since carried to the scaffold on account of their politics."

"Because they meddled with politics. Your mother is in no serious danger, though it needs nerve in a woman to be able to think so. There are few women in the State, and fewer of her time of life anywhere, that would do what she has done; and I give the girls great credit for sticking by her. Half the young men in town are desperate at the thought of three such charming creatures thus exposing themselves to insult. Your mother has only been sued."

"Sued! Whom does she owe, or what can she have done to have brought this indignity on her?"

"You know, or ought to know, how it is in this country, Littlepage; we must have a little law, even when most bent on breaking it. A downright straightforward rascal, who openly sets law at defiance, is a wonder. Then we have a great talk of liberty when plotting to give it the deepest stab; and religion even gets to share in no small portion of our vices. Thus it is that the anti-renters have dragged in the law in aid of their designs. I understand one of the Rensselaers has been sued for money borrowed in a ferry-boat to help him across a river under his own door, and for potatoes bought by his wife in the streets of Albany!"

"But neither of the Rensselaers need borrow money to cross the ferry, as the ferry-men would trust him; and no lady of the Rensselaer family ever bought potatoes in the streets of Albany, I'll answer for it."

"You have brought back some knowledge from your travels, I find!" said Jack Dunning, with comic gravity. "Your mother writes me that *she* has been sued for twenty-seven pairs of shoes furnished her by a shoemaker whom she never saw, or heard of, until she received the summons!"

"This, then, is one of the species of annoy-

ances that has been adopted to bully the landlords out of their property?"

"It is; and if the landlords have recourse even to the covenants of their leases, solemnly and deliberately made, and as solemnly guaranteed by a fundamental law, the cry is raised of 'aristocracy' and 'oppression' by these very men, and echoed by many of the creatures who get seats in high places among us—or what *would* be high places, if filled with men worthy of their trusts."

"I see you do not mince your words, Jack."

"Why should I? Words are all that is left me. I am of no more weight in the government of this State than that Irishman, who let you in just now, will be, five years hence—less, for he will vote to suit a majority; and, as I shall vote understandingly, my vote will probably do no one any good."

Dunning belonged to a school that mingles a good deal of speculative and impracticable theory, with a great deal of sound and just principles; but who render themselves useless because they will admit of no compromises. He did not belong to the class of American *doctrinaires*, however, or to those who contend —no, not *contend*, for no one does *that* any

longer in this country, whatever may be his opinion on the subject—but those who *think* that political power, as in the last resort, should be the property of the few; for he was willing New York should have a very broad constituency. Nevertheless, he was opposed to the universal suffrage, in its wide extent, that does actually exist; as I suppose quite three-fourths of the whole population are opposed to it, in their hearts, though no political man of influence, now existing, has the moral calibre necessary to take the lead in putting it down. Dunning deferred to principles, and not to men. He well knew that an infallible whole was not to be composed of fallible parts; and while he thought majorities ought to determine many things, that there are rights and principles that are superior to even such *unanimity* as man can manifest, and much more to their majorities. But Dunning had no selfish views connected with his political notions, wanting no office, and feeling no motive to affect that which he neither thought nor wished. He never had quitted home, or it is highly probable his views of the comparative abuses of the different systems that prevail in the world would have been essentially modified. Those he saw had unavoidably a

democratic source, there being neither monarch nor aristocrat to produce any other; and, under such circumstances, as abuses certainly abound, it is not at all surprising that he sometimes a little distorted facts, and magnified evils.

"And my noble, high-spirited, and venerable mother has actually gone to the Nest to face the enemy!" exclaimed my uncle, after a thoughtful pause.

"She has, indeed; and the noble, high-spirited, though not venerable, young ladies have gone with her," returned Mr. Dunning, in his caustic way.

"All three, do you mean?"

"Every one of them—Martha, Henrietta, and Anne."

"I am surprised that the last should have done so. Anne Marston is such a meek, quiet, peace-loving person, that I should think *she* would have preferred remaining, as she naturally might have done, without exciting remark, with her own mother."

"She has not, nevertheless. Mrs. Littlepage *would* brave the anti-renters, and the three maidens *would* be her companions. I dare say, Ro, you know how it is with the gentle sex, when they make up their minds?"

"My girls are all good girls, and have given me very little trouble," answered my uncle, complacently.

"Yes, I dare say that may be true. You have only been absent from home five years this trip."

"An attentive guardian, notwithstanding, since I left you as a substitute. Has my mother written to you since her arrival among the hosts of the Philistines?",

"She has, indeed, Littlepage," answered Dunning, gravely; "I have heard from her three times, for she writes to urge my not appearing on the estate. I did intend to pay her a visit; but she tells me that it might lead to a violent scene, and can do no good. As the rents will not be due until autumn, and Master Hugh is now of age, and was to be here to look after his own affairs, I have seen no motive for incurring the risk of the tarring and feathering. We American lawyers, young gentleman, wear no wigs."

"Does my mother write herself, or employ another?" inquired my uncle, with interest.

"She honours me with her own hand. Your mother writes much better than you do yourself, Roger."

"That is owing to her once having carried

chain, as she would say herself. Has Martha written to you?"

"Of course. Sweet little Patty and I are bosom friends, as you know."

"And does she say anything of the Indian and the negro?"

"Jaaf and Susquesus? To be sure she does. Both are living still, and both are well. I saw them myself, and even ate of their venison, so lately as last winter.

"Those old fellows must have each lived a great deal more than his century, Jack. They were with my grandfather in the old French war, as active, useful men—older, then, than *my* grandfather!"

"Ay! a nigger or a redskin, before all others, for holding on to life, when they have been temperate. Let me see—that expedition of Abercrombie's was about eighty years since; why, these fellows must be well turned of their hundred, though Jaap is rather the oldest, judging from appearances."

"I believe no one knows the age of either. A hundred each has been thought, now, for many years. Susquesus was surprisingly active, too, when I last saw him—like a healthy man of eighty."

"He has failed of late, though he actually shot a deer, as I told you, last winter. Both the old fellows stray down to the Nest, Martha writes me; and the Indian is highly scandalized at the miserable imitations of his race that are now abroad. I have even heard that he and Yop have actually contemplated taking the field against them. Seneca Newcome is their especial aversion."

"How is Opportunity?" I inquired. "Does she take any part in this movement?"

"A decided one, I hear. She is anti-rent, while she wishes to keep on good terms with her landlord; and that is endeavouring to serve God and Mammon. She is not the first, however, by a thousand, that wears two faces in this business."

"Hugh has a deep admiration of Opportunity," observed my uncle, "and you had needs be tender in your strictures. The modern Seneca, I take it, is dead against us?"

"Seneky wishes to go to the legislature, and of course he is on the side of votes. Then his brother is a tenant at the mill, and naturally wishes to be the landlord. He is also interested in the land himself. One thing has struck me in this controversy as highly worthy of notice;

and it is the *naïveté* with which men reconcile the obvious longings of covetousness with what they are pleased to fancy the principles of liberty! When a man has worked a farm a certain number of years, he boldly sets up the doctrine that the fact itself gives him a high moral claim to possess it for ever. A moment's examination will expose the fallacy by which these sophists apply the flattering unction to their souls. They work their farms under a lease, and in virtue of its covenants. Now, in a moral sense, all that time can do in such a case, is to render these covenants the more sacred, and consequently more binding; but these worthies, whose morality is all on one side, imagine that these time-honoured covenants give them a right to fly from their own conditions during their existence, and to raise pretensions far exceeding anything they themselves confer, the moment they cease."

"Poh, poh! Jack; there is no need of refining at all, to come at the merits of such a question. This is a civilized country, or it is not. If it be a civilized country, it will respect the rights of property, and its own laws; and if the reverse, it will not respect them. As for setting up the doctrine, at this late day, when

millions and millions are invested in this particular species of property, that the leasehold tenure is opposed to the *spirit* of institutions of which it has substantially formed a part, ever since those institutions have themselves had an existence, it requires a bold front, and more capacity than any man at Albany possesses, to make the doctrines go down. Men may run off with the notion that the *tendencies* to certain abuses, which mark every system, form their spirit; but this is a fallacy that a very little thought will correct. Is it true that proposals have actually been made, by these pretenders to liberty, to appoint commissioners to act as arbitrators between the landlords and tenants, and to decide points that no one has any right to raise?"

"True as Holy Writ; and a regular 'Star Chamber' tribunal it would be! It is wonderful, after all, how extremes do meet!"

"That is as certain as the return of the sun after night. But let us now talk of our project, Jack, and of the means of getting among these self-deluded men—deluded by their own covetousness—without being discovered; for I am determined to see them, and to judge of their motives and conduct for myself."

"Take care of the tar-barrel, and of the pillow-case of feathers, Roger!"

"I shall endeavour so to do."

We then discussed the matter before us at length and leisurely. I shall not relate all that was said, as it would be going over the same ground twice, but refer the reader to the regular narrative. At the usual hour we retired to our beds, retaining the name of Davidson, as convenient and prudent. Next day Mr. John Dunning busied himself in our behalf, and made himself exceedingly useful to us. In his character of an old bachelor, he had many acquaintances at the theatre; and through his friends of the green-room he supplied each of us with a wig. Both my uncle and myself spoke German reasonably well, and our original plan was to travel in the characters of immigrant trinket and essence pedlars. But I had a fancy for a hand-organ and a monkey; and it was finally agreed that Mr. Hugh Roger Littlepage, senior, was to undertake this adventure with a box of cheap watches and gilded trinkets; while Mr. Hugh Roger Littlepage, junior, was to commence his travels at home, in the character of a music-grinder. Modesty will not permit me to say all I might, in favour

of my own skill in music in general; but I sang well for an amateur, and played, both on the violin and flute, far better than is common.

Everything was arranged in the course of the following day, our wigs of themselves completely effecting all the disguises that were necessary. As for my uncle, he was nearly bald, and a wig was no great encumbrance; but my shaggy locks gave me some trouble. A little clipping, however, answered the turn; and I had a hearty laugh at myself, in costume, that afternoon, before Dunning's dressing-room glass. We got round the felony law, about being armed and disguised, by carrying no weapons but our tools in the way of trade.

CHAPTER V.

"And she hath smiles to earth unknown—
Smiles, that with motion of their own
Do spread, and sink, and rise;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes."

WORDSWORTH.

I WAS early in costume the following morning. I question if my own mother could have known me, had she lived long enough to see the whiskers sprout on my cheeks, and to contemplate my countenance as a man. I went into Dunning's library, drew the little hurdy-gurdy from its hiding-place, slung it, and began to play St. Patrick's Day in the Morning, with spirit, and, I trust I may add, with execution. I was in the height of the air, when the door opened, and Barney thrust his high-cheeked-bone face into the room, his mouth as wide open as that of a frozen porker.

"Where the divil did ye come from?" demanded the new footman, with the muscles of that vast aperture of his working from grin to grim, and grim to grin again. "Yee's wilcome to the tchune; but how comes ye here?"

"I coomes vrom Halle, in Preussen. Vat isht your vaterland?"

"Be yees a Jew?"

"Nein—I isht a goot Christian. Vilt you haf Yankee Tootle?"

"Yankee T'under! Ye'll wake up the masther, and he'll be displais'd, else ye might work upon t'at tchune till the end of time. That I should hear it here, in my own liberary, and ould Ireland t'ree thousand laigues away!"

A laugh from Dunning interrupted the dialogue, when Barney vanished, no doubt anticipating some species of American punishment for a presumed delinquency. Whether the blundering, well-meaning, honest fellow really ascertained who we were that breakfasted with his master, I do not know; but we got the meal and left the house without seeing his face again, Dunning having a young yellow fellow to do the service of the table.

I need scarcely say that I felt a little awkward at finding myself in the streets of New

York in such a guise; but the gravity and self-possession of my uncle were a constant source of amusement to me. He actually sold a watch on the wharf before the boat left it, though I imputed his success to the circumstance that his price was what a brother dealer, who happened to be trading in the same neighbourhood, pronounced "onconscionably low." We took a comfortable state-room between us, under the pretence of locking up our property, and strolled about the boat, gaping and looking curious, as became our class.

"Here are at least a dozen people that I know," said my uncle, as we were lounging around—loafing around, is the modern Doric—about the time that the boat was paddling past Fort Washington; "I have reconnoitred in all quarters, and find quite a dozen. I have been conversing with an old school-fellow, and one with whom I have ever lived in tolerable intimacy, for the last ten minutes, and find my broken English and disguise are perfect. I am confident my dear mother herself would not recognise me."

"We can then amuse ourselves with my grandmother and the young ladies," I answered, "when we reach the Nest. For my part, it

strikes me that we had better keep our own secret to the last moment."

"Hush! As I live, there is Seneca Newcome this moment! He is coming this way, and we must be Germans again."

Sure enough, there was 'Squire Seneky, as the honest farmers around the Nest call him; though many of them must change their practices, or it will shortly become so absurd to apply the term "hónest" to them, that no one will have the hardihood to use it. Newcome came slowly towards the forecastle, on which wewere standing; and my uncle determined to get into conversation with him, as a means of further proving the virtue of our disguises, as well as possibly of opening the way to some communications that might facilitate our visit to the Nest. With this view, the pretended pedlar drew a watch from his pocket, and, offering it meekly to the inspection of the quasi lawyer, he said—

"Puy a vatch, shentlemans?"

"Hey! what? Oh! a watch," returned Seneca, in that high, condescending, vulgar key, with which the salt of the earth usually affect to treat those they evidently think much beneath them in intellect, station, or some other

great essential, at the very moment they are bursting with envy, and denouncing as aristocrats all who are above them. "Hey! a watch, is it? What countryman are you, friend?"

"A Charmans—ein Teutscher."

"A German—ine Tycher is the place you come from, I s'pose?"

"Nein—ein Teutscher isht a Charman."

"Oh, yes! I understand. How long have you been in Ameriky?"

"Twelf moont's."

"Why, that's most long enough to make you citizens. Where do you live?"

"Nowhere; I lifs jest asht it happens—soometimes here, and soometimes dere."

"Ay, ay! I understand—no legal domicile, but lead a wandering life. Have you many of these watches for sale?"

"Yees—I haf asht many as twenty. Dey are as sheep as dirt, and go like pig clocks."

"And what may be your price for this?"

"Dat you can haf for only eight tollars. Effery poty wilt say it is golt, dat doesn't know petter."

"Oh! it isn't gold, then—I swan!"—what this oath meant I never exactly knew, though I suppose it to be a puritan mode of saying "I

swear!" the attempts to cheat the devil in this way being very common among their pious descendants, though even "Smith Thompson" himself can do no man any good in such a case of conscience—"I swan! you come plaguy near taking even me in! Will you come down from that price any?"

"If you wilt gif me some atfice, perhaps I may. You look like a goot shentlemans, and one dat woultn't sheat a poor Charmans; ant effery poty wants so much to sheat de poor Charmans, dat I will take six, if you will drow in some atfice."

"Advice? You have come to the right man for that! Walk a little this way, where we shall be alone. What is the natur' of the matter—action on the case, or a tort?"

"Nein, nein! it isht not law dat I wants, put atfice."

"Well, but advice leads to law, ninety-nine times in a hundred."

"Ya, ya!" answered the pedlar, laughing; "dat may be so; put it isht not what I vants —I vants to know vere a Charman can trafel wit' his goots in de coontry, and not in de pig towns."

"I understand you—six dollars, hey! That

sounds high for such a looking watch"—he had just before mistaken it for gold—"but I'm always the poor man's friend, and despise aristocracy"—what Seneca hated with the strongest hate, he ever fancied he *despised* the most, and by aristocracy he merely understood gentlemen and ladies, in the true signification of the words —"why, I'm always ready to help along the honest citizen. If you could make up your mind now to part with this one watch for nawthin', I think I could tell you a part of the country where you might sell the other nineteen in a week."

"Goot!" exclaimed my uncle, cheerfully. "Take him—he ist your broberty, and wilcome. Only show me de town where I canst sell de nineteen udders."

Had my uncle Ro been a true son of peddling, he would have charged a dollar extra on each of the nineteen, and made eleven dollars by his present liberality.

"It is no town at all—only a township," returned the literal Seneca. "Did you expect it would be a city?"

"Vat cares I? I woult radder sell my vatches to goot, honest, country men, dan asht to de best burghers in de land."

"You're my man! The right spirit is in you. I hope you're no patroon—no aristocrat?"

"I don't know vat isht badroon, or vat isht arishtocrat."

"No! You are a happy man in your ignorance. A patroon is a nobleman who owns another man's land; and an aristocrat is a body that thinks himself better than his neighbours, friend!"

"Well, den, I isht no badroon, for I don't own no land at all, not even mine own; and I ishn't petter asht no poty at all."

"Yes, you be; you've only to think so, and you'll be the greatest gentleman of 'em all."

"Well, den, I will dry and dink so, and be petter asht de greatest shentlemans of dem all. But dat won't do, nudder, as dat vilt make me petter dan you; for you are one of de greatest of dem all, shentlemans."

"Oh! as for me, let me alone. I scorn being on their level. I go for 'Down with the rent!' and so'll you, too, afore you've been a week in our part of the country."

"Vat isht de rent dat you vants to git down?"

"It's a thing that's opposed to the spirit of the institutions, as you can see by my feelin's

at this very moment. But no matter! I'll keep the watch, if you say so, and show you the way into that part of the country, as your pay."

"Agreet, shentlemans. Vat I vants is atfice, and vat you vants is a vatch."

Here uncle Ro laughed so much like himself, when he ought clearly to have laughed in broken English, that I was very much afraid he might give the alarm to our companion; but he did not. From that time, the best relations existed between us and Seneca, who, in the course of the day, recognised us by sundry smiles and winks, though I could plainly see he did not like the anti-aristocratic principle sufficiently to wish to seem too intimate with us. Before we reached the islands, however, he gave us directions where to meet him in the morning, and we parted, when the boat stopped alongside of the pier at Albany that afternoon, the best friends in the world.

"Albany! dear, good old Albany!" exclaimed my uncle Ro, as we stopped on the draw of the bridge to look at the busy scene in the basin, where literally hundreds of canal-boats were either lying to discharge or to load, or were coming and going, to say nothing of other craft; "dear, good old Albany! you are a town

to which I ever return with pleasure, for you at least never disappoint me. A first-rate country-place you are; and, though I miss your quaint old Dutch church, and your rustic-looking old *English* church from the centre of your principal street, almost every change *you* make is respectable. I know nothing that tells so much against you as changing the name of Market-street by the paltry imitation of Broadway; but, considering that a horde of Yankees have come down upon you since the commencement of the present century, you are lucky that the street was not called the Appian Way. But, excellent old Albany! whom even the corruptions of politics cannot change in the core, lying against thy hill-side, and surrounded with thy picturesque scenery, there is an air of respectability about thee that I admire, and a quiet prosperity that I love. Yet, how changed since my boyhood! Thy simple stoups have all vanished; thy gables are disappearing; marble and granite are rising in thy streets, too, but they take honest shapes, and are free from the ambition of mounting on stilts; thy basin has changed the whole character of thy once semi-sylvan, semi-commercial river; but it gives to thy young manhood an appearance of abun-

dance and thrift that promise well for thy age!" The reader may depend on it that I laughed heartily at this rhapsody; for I could hardly enter into my uncle's feelings. Albany is certainly a very good sort of a place, and relatively a more respectable-looking town than the "*commercial* emporium," which, after all, externally, is a mere huge expansion of a very marked mediocrity, with the pretension of a capital in its estimate of itself. But Albany lays no claim to be any thing more than a provincial town, and in that class it is highly placed. By the way, there is nothing in which "*our* people," to speak idiomatically, more deceive themselves, than in their estimate of what composes a capital. It would be ridiculous to suppose that the representatives of such a government as this could impart to any place the tone, opinions, habits and manners of a capital; for, if they did, they would impart it on the novel principle of communicating that which they do not possess in their own persons. Congress itself, though tolerably free from most shackles, including those of the constitution, is not up to that. In my opinion, a man accustomed to the world might be placed blindfolded in the most finished quarter of New

York, and the place has new quarters in which the incongruities I have already mentioned do not exist, and, my life on it, he could pronounce, as soon as the bandage was removed, that he was not in a town where the tone of a capital exists. The last thing to make a capital is trade. Indeed, the man who hears the words "business," and "the merchants," ringing in his ears, may safely conclude, *de factò*,' that he is not in a capital. Now, a New-York village is often much less rustic than the villages of the most advanced country of Europe; but a New York town is many degrees below any capital of a large State in the old world.

Will New York ever be a capital? Yes,—out of all question, yes. But the day will not come until after the sudden changes of condition which immediately and so naturally succeeded the revolution, have ceased to influence ordinary society, and those above again impart to those below more than they receive. This restoration to the natural state of things must take place, as soon as society gets settled; and there will be nothing to prevent a town living under our own institutions,—spirit, *tendencies*, and all,—from obtaining the highest tone that ever yet prevailed in a capital. The folly is in anticipating the natural course of events. Nothing will more

hasten these events, however, than a literature that is controlled, not by the lower, but by the higher opinion of the country; which literature is yet, in a great degree, to be created.

I had dispensed with the monkey, after trying to get along with the creature for an hour or two, and went around only with my music. I would rather manage an army of anti-renters than one monkey. With the hurdy-gurdy slung around my neck, therefore, I followed my uncle, who actually sold another watch before we reached a tavern. Of course we did not presume to go to Congress Hall, or the Eagle, for we knew we should not be admitted. This was the toughest part of our adventures. I am of opinion my uncle made a mistake; for he ventured to a second-class house, under the impression that one of the sort usually frequented by men of our supposed stamp might prove too coarse for us, altogether. I think we should have been better satisfied with the coarse fare of a coarse tavern, than with the shabby-genteel of the house we blundered into. In the former, every thing would have reminded us, in a way we expected to be reminded, that we were out of the common track; and we might have been amused with the change, though it is one singularly hard to be endured. I remember to have

heard a young man, accustomed from childhood to the better habits of the country, but who went to sea a lad, before the mast, declare that the coarseness of his shipmates, and there is no vulgarity about a true sailor, even when coarsest, gave him more trouble to overcome, than all the gales, physical sufferings, labour, exposures and dangers, put together. I must confess, I have found it so too, in my little experience. While acting as a strolling musician, I could get along with any thing better than the coarse habits which I encountered at the table. Your silver-forkisms, and your purely conventional customs, as a matter of course, no man of the world attaches any serious importance to; but there are conventionalities that belong to the fundamental principles of civilized society, which become second nature, and with which it gets to be hard, indeed, to dispense. I shall say as little as possible of the disagreeables of my new trade, therefore, but stick to the essentials.

The morning of the day which succeeded that of our arrival at Albany, my uncle Ro and I took our seats in the train, intending to go to Saratoga viâ Troy. I wonder the Trojan who first thought of playing this travestie on Homer,

did not think of calling the place Troyville, or Troyborough! That would have been semi-American, at least, whereas the present appellation is so purely classical! It is impossible to walk through the streets of this neat and flourishing town, which already counts its twenty thousand souls, and not have the images of Achilles, and Hector, and Priam, and Hecuba, pressing on the imagination a little uncomfortably. Had the place been called Try, the name would have been a sensible one; for it is trying all it can to get the better of Albany; and, much as I love the latter venerable old town, I hope Troy may succeed in its trying to prevent the Hudson from being bridged. By the way, I will here remark, for the benefit of those who have never seen any country but their own, that there is a view on the road between Schenectady and this Grecian place, just where the heights give the first full appearance of the valley of the Hudson, including glimpses of Waterford, Lansingburg and Albany, with a full view of both Troys, which gives one a better idea of the affluence of European scenery, than almost any other spot I can recall in America. To my hurdy-gurdy:

I made my first essay as a musician in public

beneath the windows of the principal inn of Troy. I cannot say much in favour of the instrument, though I trust the playing itself was somewhat respectable. This I know full well, that I soon brought a dozen fair faces to the windows of the inn, and that each was decorated with a smile. Then it was that I regretted the monkey. Such an opening could not but awaken the dormant ambition of even a "patriot" of the purest water, and I will own I was gratified.

Among the curious who thus appeared, were two whom I at once supposed to be father and daughter. The former was a clergyman, and, as I fancied by something in his air, of "*the* Church," begging pardon of those who take offence at this exclusive title, and to whom I will just give a hint in passing. Any one at all acquainted with mankind, will at once understand that no man who is certain of possessing any particular advantage, ever manifests much sensibility because another lays claim to it also. In the constant struggles of the jealous, for instance, on the subject of that universal source of jealous feeling, social position, the man or woman who is conscious of claims never troubles himself or herself about them. For

them the obvious fact is sufficient. If it be answered to this that the pretension of "*the* Church" is exclusive, I shall admit it is, and "conclusive," too. It is not exclusive, however, in the sense urged, since no one denies that there are many branches to "the Church," although those branches do not embrace everything. I would advise those who take offence at "our" styling "ourselves" "*the* Church," to style themselves "*the* Church," just as they call all their parsons bishops, and see who will care about it. That is a touchstone which will soon separate the true metal from the alloy.

My parson, I could easily see, was a *Church* clergyman — not a *meeting*-house clergyman. How I ascertained that fact at a glance, I shall not reveal; but I also saw in his countenance some of that curiosity which marks simplicity of character: it was not a vulgar feeling, but one which induced him to beckon me to approach a little nearer. I did so, when he invited me in. It was a little awkward, at first, I must acknowledge, to be beckoned about in this manner; but there was something in the air and countenance of the daughter that induced me not to hesitate about complying. I cannot say that her beauty was so *very* striking, though she was decidedly

pretty; but the expression of her face, eyes, smile, and all put together, was so singularly sweet and feminine, that I felt impelled by a sympathy I shall not attempt to explain, to enter the house, and ascend to the door of a parlour that I saw at once was public, though it then contained no one but my proper hosts.

"Walk in, young man," said the father, in a benevolent tone of voice. "I am curious to see that instrument; and my daughter here, who has a taste for music, wishes it as much as I do myself. What do you call it?"

"Hurty-gurty," I answered.

"From what part of the world do you come, my young friend?" continued the clergyman, raising his meek eyes to mine still more curiously.

"Vrom Charmany; vrom Preussen, vere did reign so late de good Koenig Wilhelm."

"What does he say, Molly?"

So the pretty creature bore the name of Mary! I liked the Molly, too; it was a good sign, as none but the truly respectable dare use such familiar appellations in these ambitious times. Molly sounded as if these people had the *aplomb* of position and conscious breeding. Had they been vulgar, it would have been Mollissa.

"It is not difficult to translate, father," answered one of the sweetest voices that had ever poured its melody on my ear, and which was rendered still more musical by the slight laugh that mingled with it. "He says he is from Germany—from Prussia, where the good King William lately reigned."

I liked the "father," too—that sounded refreshing, after passing a night among a tribe of foul-nosed adventurers in humanity, every one of whom had done his or her share towards caricaturing the once pretty appellatives of "Pa" and "Ma." A young lady may still say "Papa," or even "Mamma," though it were far better that she said "Father" and "Mother;" but as for "Pa" and "Ma," they are now done with in respectable life. They will not even do for the nursery.

"And this instrument is a hurdy-gurdy?" continued the clergyman. "What have we here—the name spelt on it?"

"Dat isht de maker's name—*Hochstiel fecit.*"

"Fecit!" repeated the clergyman; "is that German?"

"Nein—dat isht Latin; *facio, feci, factum, facere,—feci, feciste,* FECIT. It means make, I suppose you know."

The parson looked at me, and at my dress

and figure, with open surprise, and smiled as his eye glanced at his daughter. If asked why I made this silly display of lower-form learning, I can only say that I chafed at being fancied a mere every-day street musician, that had left his monkey at home, by the charming girl who stood gracefully bending over her father's elbow, as the latter examined the inscription that was stamped on a small piece of ivory which had been let into the instrument. I could see that Mary shrunk back a little under the sensitive feeling, so natural to her sex, that she was manifesting too much freedom of manner for the presence of a youth who was nearer to her own class than she could have supposed it possible for a player on the hurdy-gurdy to be. A blush succeeded; but the glance of the soft blue eye that instantly followed, seemed to set all at rest, and she leaned over her father's elbow again.

"You understand Latin, then?" demanded the parent, examining me over his spectacles from head to foot.

"A leetle, sir—just a ferry leetle. In my coontry, efery mans isht obliget to be a soldier some time, and them t'at knows Latin can be made sergeants und corporals."

"That is Prussia, is it?"

"Ya—Preussen, vere so late did reign de goot Koenig Wilhelm."

"And is Latin much understood among you? I have heard that, in Hungary, most well-informed persons even speak the tongue."

"In Charmany it isht not so. We all l'arnts somet'ing, but not all dost l'arn efery t'ing."

I could see a smile struggling around the sweet lips of that dear girl, after I had thus delivered myself, as I fancied, with a most accurate inaccuracy; but she succeeded in repressing it, though those provoking eyes of hers continued to laugh, much of the time our interview lasted.

"Oh! I very well know that in Prussia the schools are quite good, and that your government pays great attention to the wants of all classes," rejoined the clergyman; "but I confess some surprise that *you* should understand anything of Latin. Now, even in this country where we boast so much——"

"Ye-e-s," I could not refrain from drawling out, "dey does poast a great teal in dis coontry!"

Mary actually laughed; whether it was at my words, or at the somewhat comical manner

I had assumed—a manner in which simplicity was *tant soit peu* blended with irony—I shall not pretend to say. As for the father, his simplicity was of proof; and, after civilly waiting until my interruption was done, he resumed what he had been on the point of saying.

"I was about to add," continued the clergyman, "that even in this country, where we boast so much"—the little minx of a daughter passed her hand over her eyes, and fairly coloured with the effort she made not to laugh again—"of the common schools, and of their influence on the public mind, it is not usual to find persons of your condition who understand the dead languages."

"Ye-e-s," I replied; "it isht my condition dat misleats you, sir. Mine fat'er wast a shentlemans, and he gifet me as goot an etication as de Koenig did gif to de Kron Prinz."

Here, my desire to appear well in the eyes of Mary caused me to run into another silly indiscretion. How I was to explain the circumstance of the son of a Prussian gentleman, whose father had given him an education as good as that which the King of his country had given to its Crown Prince, being in the streets of Troy, playing on a hurdy-gurdy, was a diffi-

culty I did not reflect on for a moment. The idea of being thought by that sweet girl a mere uneducated boor, was intolerable to me; and I threw it off by this desperate falsehood—false in its accessories, but true in its main facts—as one would resent an insult. Fortune favoured me, however, far more than I had any right to expect.

There is a singular disposition in the American character to believe every well-mannered European at least a count. I do not mean that those who have seen the world are not like other persons in this respect; but a very great proportion of the country never has seen any other world than a world of "business." The credulity on this subject surpasseth belief; and, were I to relate facts of this nature that might be established in a court of justice, the very parties connected with them would be ready to swear that they are caricatures. Now, well-mannered I trust I am, and, though plainly dressed and thoroughly disguised, neither my air nor attire was absolutely mean. As my clothes were new, I was neat in my appearance; and there were possibly some incongruities about the last, that might have struck eyes more penetrating than those of my companions.

I could see that both father and daughter felt a lively interest in me, the instant I gave them reason to believe I was one of better fortunes. So many crude notions exist among us on the subject of convulsions and revolutions in Europe, that I dare say, had I told any improbable tale of the political condition of Prussia, it would have gone down; for nothing so much resembles the ignorance that prevails in America, generally, concerning the true state of things in Europe, as the ignorance that prevails in Europe, generally, concerning the true state of things in America. As for Mary, her soft eyes seemed to me to be imbued with thrice their customary gentleness and compassion, as she recoiled a step in native modesty, and gazed at me, when I had made my revelation.

"If such is the case, my young friend," returned the clergyman, with benevolent interest, "you ought, and *might* easily be placed in a better position than this you are now in. Have you any knowledge of Greek?"

"Certainly—Greek is moch study in Charmany."

'In for a penny, in for a pound,' I thought.

"And the modern languages—do you understand any of them?"

"I speaks de five great tongues of Europe, more ast less well; and I read dem all, easily."

"The *five* tongues!" said the clergyman, counting on his fingers; "what can they be, Mary?"

"French, and German, and Spanish, and Italian, I suppose, sir."

"These make but four. What can be the fifth, my dear?"

"De yoong laty forgets de Englisch. De Englisch is das funf."

"Oh! yes, the English!" exclaimed the pretty creature, pressing her lips together to prevent laughing in my face.

"True—I had forgotten the English, not being accustomed to think of it as a mere European tongue. I suppose, young man, you naturally speak the English less fluently than any other of your five languages?"

"Ya!"

Again the smile struggled to the lips of Mary.

"I feel a deep interest in you as a stranger, and am sorry we have only met to part so soon. Which way shall you be likely to direct your steps, my Prussian young friend?"

"I go to a place which is callet Ravensnest —goot place to sell vatch, dey tells me."

"Ravensnest!" exclaimed the father.

"Ravensnest!" repeated the daughter, and that in tones which put the hurdy-gurdy to shame.

"Why, Ravensnest is the place where I live, and the parish of which I am the clergyman—the Protestant Episcopal clergyman, I mean."

This, then, was the Rev. Mr. Warren, the divine who had been called to our church the very summer I left home, and who had been there ever since! My sister Martha had written me much concerning these people, and I felt as if I had known them for years. Mr. Warren was a man of good connexions, and some education, but of no fortune whatever, who had gone into *the* Church—it was the church of his ancestors, one of whom had actually been an English bishop, a century or two ago—from choice, and contrary to the wishes of his friends. As a preacher, his success had never been great; but for the discharge of his duties no man stood higher, and no man was more respected. The living of St. Andrew's, Ravensnest, would have been poor enough, had it depended on the contributions of the parishioners. These last gave about one hundred and fifty dollars a-year for their share of the support of a priest. I gave

another hundred, as regularly as clock-work, and had been made to do so throughout a long minority; and my grandmother and sister made up another fifty between them. But there was a glebe of fifty acres of capital land, a wood-lot, and a fund of two thousand dollars at interest; the whole proceeding from endowments made by my grandfather, during his life-time. Altogether the living may have been worth a clear five hundred dollars a-year, in addition to a comfortable house, hay, wood, vegetables, pasture, and some advantages in the way of small crops. Few country clergymen were better off than the rector of St. Andrew's, Ravensnest, and all as a consequence of the feudal and aristocratic habits of the Littlepages, though I say it, perhaps, who might better not, in times like these.

My letters had told me that the Rev. Mr. Warren was a widower; that Mary was his only child; that he was a *truly* pious, not a *sham*-pious, and a really zealous clergyman; a man of purest truth, whose word was gospel—of great simplicity and integrity of mind and character; that he never spoke evil of others, and that a complaint of this world and its hardships seldom crossed his lips. He loved

his fellow-creatures, both naturally and on principle; mourned over the state of the diocese, and greatly preferred piety even to high-churchism. High-churchman he was, nevertheless; though it was not a high-churchmanship that outweighed the loftier considerations of his Christian duties, and left him equally without opinions of his own in matters of morals, and without a proper respect, in practice, for those that he had solemnly vowed to maintain.

His daughter was described as a sweet-tempered, arch, modest, sensible, and well-bred girl, that had received a far better education than her father's means would have permitted him to bestow, through the liberality and affection of a widowed sister of her mother's, who was affluent, and had caused her to attend the same school as that to which she had sent her own daughters. In a word, she was a most charming neighbour; and her presence at Ravensnest had rendered Martha's annual visits to the "old house" (built in 1785) not only less irksome, but actually pleasant. Such had been my sister's account of the Warrens and their qualities, throughout a correspondence of five years. I have even fancied that she loved this

Mary Warren better than she loved any of her uncle's wards, herself of course excepted.

The foregoing flashed through my mind, the instant the clergyman announced himself; but the coincidence of our being on the way to the same part of the country, seemed to strike him as forcibly as it did myself. What Mary thought of the matter, I had no means of ascertaining.

"This is singular enough," resumed Mr. Warren. "What has directed your steps towards Ravensnest?"

"Dey tell mine ooncle 'tis goot place to sell moch vatch."

"You have an uncle, then? Ah! I see him there in the street, showing a watch at this moment to a gentleman. Is your uncle a linguist, too, and has he been as well educated as you seem to be yourself?"

"Certain—he moch more of a shentleman dan ast de shentleman to whom he now sell vatch."

"These must be the very persons," put in Mary, a little eagerly, "of whom Mr. Newcome spoke, as the"—the dear girl did not like to say pedlars, after what I had told them of my origin; so she added—"dealers in watches

and trinkets, who intended to visit our part of the country."

"You are right, my dear, and the whole matter is now clear. Mr. Newcome said he expected them to join us at Troy, when we should proceed in the train together as far as Saratoga. But here comes Opportunity herself, and her brother cannot be far off."

At that moment, sure enough, my old acquaintance, Opportunity Newcome, came into the room, a public parlour, with an air of great self-satisfaction, and a *nonchalance* of manner that was not a little more peculiar to herself than it is to most of her caste. I trembled for my disguise, since, to be quite frank on a very delicate subject, Opportunity had made so very dead a set at me—"setting a cap" is but a pitiful phrase to express the assault I had to withstand—as scarcely to leave a hope that her feminine instinct, increased and stimulated with the wish to be mistress of the Nest house, could possibly overlook the thousand and one personal peculiarities that must still remain about one, whose personal peculiarities she had made her particular study.

CHAPTER VI.

"O, sic a geek she gave her head,
And sic a toss she gave her feather;
Man, saw ye ne'er a bonnier lass
Before, among the blooming heather?"
ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

"AH! here are some charming French *vignettes!*" cried Opportunity, running up to a table where lay some inferior coloured engravings, that were intended to represent the cardinal virtues, under the forms of tawdry female beauties. The workmanship was French, as were the inscriptions. Now, Opportunity knew just enough French to translate these inscriptions, simple and school-girl as they were, as wrong as they could possibly be translated, under the circumstances."

"*La Vertue,*" cried Opportunity, in a high, decided way, as if to make sure of an audience, "*The* Virtue; *La Solitude,*" pronouncing the last word in a desperately English accent, *The*

Solitude; *La Charité, The* Charity. It is really delightful, Mary, as 'Sarah Soothings' would say, to meet with these glimmerings of taste in this wilderness of the world."

I wondered who the deuce "Sarah Soothings" could be, but afterwards learned this was the *nom-de-guerre* of a female contributor to the magazines, who, I dare say, silly as she might be, was never silly enough to record the sentiments Opportunity had just professed to repeat. As for *The la Charité*, and *The la Vertue*, they did not in the least surprise me; for Martha, the hussy, often made herself merry by recording that young lady's *tours de force* in French. On one occasion I remember she wrote me, that when Opportunity wished to say *On est venu me chercher*, instead of saying "I am come for," in homely English, which would have been the best of all, she had flown off in the high flight of "*Je suis venue pour.*"

Mary smiled, for she comprehended perfectly the difference between *la Solitude* and *the* Solitude; but she said nothing. I must acknowledge that I was so indiscreet as to smile also, though, Opportunity's back being turned towards us, these mutual signs of intelligence that escaped us both through the eyes, opened a

species of communication that, to me at least, was infinitely agreeable.

Opportunity, having shown the owner of the strange figure at which she had just glanced on entering the room, that she had studied French, now turned to take a better look at him. I have reason to think my appearance did not make a very happy impression on her; for she tossed her head, drew a chair, seated herself in the manner most opposed to the descent of down, and opened her budget of news, without the least regard to my presence, and apparently with as little attention to the wishes and tastes of her companions. Her accent, and jumping, hitching mode of speaking, with the high key in which she uttered her sentiments, too, all grated on my ears, which had become a little accustomed to different habits, in young ladies in particular, in the other hemisphere. I confess myself to be one of those who regard an even, quiet, graceful mode of utterance, as even a greater charm in a woman than beauty. Its effect is more lasting, and seems to be directly connected with the character. Mary Warren not only pronounced like one accustomed to good society; but the modulations of her voice, which was singularly sweet by nature, were

even and agreeable, as is usual with well-bred women, and as far as possible from the jerking, fluttering, now rapid, now drawling manner of Opportunity. Perhaps, in this age of "loose attire," loose habits, and free and easy deportment, the speech denotes the gentleman, or the lady, more accurately than any other off-hand test.

"Sen is enough to wear out anybody's patience!" exclaimed Opportunity. "We must quit Troy in half an hour; and I have visits that I ought to pay to Miss Jones, and Miss White, and Miss Black, and Miss Green, and Miss Brown, and three or four others; and I can't get him to come near me."

"Why not go alone?" asked Mary, quietly. "It is but a step to two or three of the houses, and you cannot possibly lose your way. I will go with you, if you desire it."

"Oh! lose my way? no, indeed! I know it too well for that. I wasn't educated in Troy, not to know something of the streets. But it looks so, to see a young lady walking in the streets without a beau! I never wish to cross a room in company without a beau; much less to cross a street. No; if Sen don't come in soon, I shall miss seeing every one of my friends, and that

will be a desperate disappointment to us all; but it can't be helped: walk without a beau I *will not*, if I never see one of them again."

"Will you accept of me, Miss Opportunity?" asked Mr. Warren. "It will afford me pleasure to be of service to you."

"Lord! Mr. Warren, you don't think of setting up for a beau at your time of life, do you? Everybody would see that you're a clergyman, and I might just as well go alone. No, if Sen don't come in at once, I must lose my visits; and the young ladies will be *so* put out about it, I know! Araminta Maria wrote me, in the most particular manner, never to go through Troy without stopping to see *her*, if I didn't see another mortal; and Kather*ine* Clotilda has as much as said she would never forgive me if I passed her door. But Seneca cares no more for the friendships of young ladies, than he does"—Miss Newcome pronounced this word "doos," notwithstanding her education, as she did "been," "ben," and fifty others just as much out of the common way—"But Seneca cares no more for the friendships of young ladies, than he does for the young patroon. I declare, Mr. Warren, I believe Sen will go crazy unless the anti-renters soon get the best of it; he does

nothing but think and talk of 'rents,' and 'aristocracy,' and 'poodle usages,' from morning till night."

We all smiled at the little mistake of Miss Opportunity, but it was of no great consequence; and I dare say she knew what she meant as well as most others who use the same term, though they spell it more accurately. "Poodle usages" are quite as applicable to anything now existing in America, as "feudal usages."

"Your brother is then occupied with a matter of the last importance to the community of which he is a member," answered the clergyman, gravely. "On the termination of this anti-rent question hangs, in my judgment, a vast amount of the future character, and much of the future destiny, of New York."

"I wonder now! I'm surprised to hear you say this, Mr. Warren, for generally you're thought to be unfriendly to the movement. Sen says, however, that everything looks well, and that *he* believes the tenants will get their lands throughout the State before they've done with it. He tells me we shall have Injins enough this summer at Ravensnest. The visit of old Mrs. Littlepage has raised a spirit that will not easily be put down, he says."

"And why should the visit of Mrs. Littlepage to the house of her grandson, and to the house built by her own husband, and in which she passed the happiest days of her life, 'raise a spirit,' as you call it, in any one in that part of the country?"

"Oh! you're episcopal, Mr. Warren; and we all know how the Episcopals feel about such matters. But, for my part, I don't think the Littlepages are a bit better than the Newcomes, though I won't liken them to some I could name at Ravensnest; but I don't think they are any better than you, yourself; and why should they ask so much more of the law than other folks?"

"I am not aware that they do ask more of the law than others; and, if they do, I'm sure they obtain less. The law in this country is virtually administered by jurors, who take good care to graduate justice, so far as they can, by a scale suited to their own opinions, and, quite often, to their prejudices. As the last are so universally opposed to persons in Mrs. Littlepage's class in life, if there be a chance to make her suffer, it is pretty certain it will be improved."

"Sen says he can't see why he should pay

rent to a Littlepage, any more than a Littlepage should pay rent to him."

"I am sorry to hear it, since there is a very sufficient reason for the former, and no reason at all for the latter. Your brother uses the land of Mr. Littlepage, and that is a reason why he should pay him rent. If the case were reversed, then, indeed, Mr. Littlepage should pay rent to your brother."

"But what reason is there that these Littlepage's should go on from father to son, from generation to generation, as our landlords, when we're just as good as they? It's time there was some change. Besides, only think, we've been at the mills, now, hard upon eighty years, grandpa having first settled there; and we have had them very mills, now, for three generations among us."

"High time, therefore, Opportunity, that there should be some change," put in Mary, with a demure smile.

"Oh! you're so intimate with Marthy Littlepage, I'm not surprised at anything *you* think or say. But reason is reason, for all that. I haven't the least grudge in the world against young Hugh Littlepage; if foreign lands haven't spoilt him, as they say they're desperate

apt to do, he's an agreeable young gentleman, and I can't say that *he* used to think himself any better than other folks."

"I should say none of the family are justly liable to the charge of so doing," returned Mary.

"Well, I'm amazed to hear you say *that*, Mary Warren. To my taste, Marthy Littlepage is as disagreeable as she can be. If the anti-rent cause had nobody better than she is to oppose it, it would soon triumph."

"May I ask, Miss Newcome, what particular reason you have for so thinking?" asked Mr. Warren, who had kept his eye on the young lady the whole time she had been thus running on, with an interest that struck me as somewhat exaggerated, when one remembered the character of the speaker, and the value of her remarks.

"I think so, Mr. Warren, because everybody says so," was the answer. "If Marthy Littlepage don't think herself better than other folks, why don't she *act* like other folks? Nothing is good enough for her in her own conceit."

Poor little Patt, who was the very *beau idéal* of nature and simplicity, as nature and simplicity manifest themselves under the influence of refinement and good-breeding, was here

accused of fancying herself better than this ambitious young lady, for no other reason than the fact of the little distinctive peculiarities of her air and deportment, which Opportunity had found utterly unattainable, after one or two efforts to compass them. In this very fact is the secret of a thousand of the absurdities and vices that are going up and down the land at this moment, like raging lions, seeking whom they may devour. Men often turn to their statute-books and constitution to find the sources of obvious evils, that, in truth, have their origin in some of the lowest passions of human nature. The entrance of Seneca at that moment, however, gave a new turn to the discourse, though it continued substantially the same. I remarked that Seneca entered with his hat on, and that he kept his head covered during most of the interview that succeeded, notwithstanding the presence of the two young ladies and the divine. As for myself, I had been so free as to remove my cap, though many might suppose it was giving myself airs, while others would have imagined it was manifesting a degree of respect to human beings that was altogether unworthy of freemen. It is getting to be a thing so particular and aristocratic to

take off the hat on entering a house, that few of the humbler democrats of America now ever think of it!

As a matter of course, Opportunity upbraided her delinquent brother for not appearing sooner to act as her beau; after which, she permitted him to say a word for himself. That Seneca was in high good-humour, was easily enough to be seen; he even rubbed his hands together in the excess of his delight.

"Something has happened to please Sen," cried the sister, her own mouth on a broad grin, in her expectation of coming in for a share of the gratification. "I wish you would get him to tell us what it is, Mary; he 'll tell *you* anything."

I cannot describe how harshly this remark grated on my nerves. The thought that Mary Warren could consent to exercise even the most distant influence over such a man as Seneca Newcome, was to the last degree unpleasant to me; and I could have wished that she would openly and indignantly repel the notion. But Mary Warren treated the whole matter very much as a person who was accustomed to such remarks would be apt to do. I cannot say that she manifested either

pleasure or displeasure; but a cold indifference was, if anything, uppermost in her manner. Possibly, I should have been content with this; but I found it very difficult to be so. Seneca, however, did not wait for Miss Warren to exert her influence to induce him to talk, but appeared well enough disposed to do it of his own accord.

"Something *has* happened to please me, I must own," he answered; "and I would as lief Mr. Warren should know what it is, as not. Things go ahead finely among us anti-renters, and we shall carry all our p'ints before long!"

"I wish I were certain no points would be carried but those that ought to be carried, Mr. Newcome," was the answer. "But what has happened, lately, to give a new aspect to the affair?"

"We're gaining strength among the politicians. Both sides are beginning to court us, and the 'spirit of the institutions' will shortly make themselves respected."

"I am delighted to hear that! It is in the intention of the institutions to repress covetousness, and uncharitableness, and all frauds, and to do nothing but what is right," observed Mr. Warren.

"Ah! here comes my friend the travelling jeweller," said Seneca, interupting the clergyman, in order to salute my uncle, who at that instant showed himself in the door of the room, cap in hand. "Walk in, Mr. Dafidson, since that is your name; Rev. Mr. Warren—Miss Mary Warren—Miss Opportunity Newcome, my sister, who will be glad to look at your wares. The cars will be detained on some special business, and we have plenty of time before us."

All this was done with a coolness and indifference of manner which went to show that Seneca had no scruples whatever on the subject of whom he introduced to any one. As for my uncle, accustomed to these free and easy manners, and probably not absolutely conscious of the figure he cut in his disguise, he bowed rather too much like a gentleman for one of his present calling, though my previous explanation of our own connexion and fallen fortunes had luckily prepared the way for this deportment.

"Come in, Mr. Dafidson, and open your box —my sister may fancy some of your trinkets; I never knew a girl that didn't."

The imaginary pedlar entered, and placed his box on a table near which I was standing,

the whole party immediately gathering around it. My presence had attracted no particular attention from either Seneca or his sister, the room being public, and my connexion with the vendor of trinkets known. In the mean time, Seneca was too full of his good news to let the subject drop; while the watches, rings, chains, brooches, bracelets, &c. &c., were passed under examination.

"Yes, Mr. Warren, I trust we are about to have a complete development of the spirit of our institutions, and that in futur' there will be no privileged classes in New York, at least."

"The last will certainly be a great gain, sir," the divine coldly answered. "Hitherto, those who have most suppressed the truth, and who have most contributed to the circulation of flattering falsehoods, have had undue advantages in America."

Seneca, obviously enough, did not like this sentiment; but I thought, by his manner, that he was somewhat accustomed to meeting with such rebuffs from Mr. Warren.

"I suppose you will admit there *are* privileged classes now among us, Mr. Warren?"

"I am ready enough to allow that, sir; it is too plain to be denied."

"Wa-all, I should like to hear *you* p'int 'em out; that I might see if we agree in our sentiments."

"Demagogues are a highly privileged class. The editors of newspapers are another highly privileged class; doing things, daily and hourly, which set all law and justice at defiance, and invading, with perfect impunity, the most precious rights of their fellow-citizens. The power of both is enormous; and, as in all cases of great and irresponsible power, both enormously abuse it."

"Wa-all, that's not my way of thinking at all. In my judgment, the privileged classes in this country are your patroons and your landlords; men that's not satisfied with a reasonable quantity of land, but who wish to hold more than the rest of their fellow-creatur's."

"I am not aware of a single privilege that any patroon—of whom, by the way, there no longer exists one, except in name—or any landlord, possesses over any one of his fellow-citizens."

"Do you call it no privilege for a man to hold all the land there may happen to be in a township? I call that a great privilege; and such as no man should have in a free country.

Other people want land as well as your Van Rensselaers and Littlepages; and other people mean to have it, too."

"On that principle, every man who owns more of any one thing than his neighbour is privileged. Even I, poor as I am, and am believed to be, am privileged over you, Mr. Newcome. I own a cassock, and have two gowns, one old and one new, and various other things of the sort, of which you have not one. What is more, I am privileged in another sense; since I can *wear* my cassock and gown, and bands, and *do* wear them often; whereas you cannot wear one of them all without making yourself laughed at."

"Oh! but them are not privileges I care anything about; if I did I would put on the things, as the law does not prohibit it."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Newcome; the law does prohibit you from wearing *my* cassock and gown contrary to my wishes."

"Wa-all, wa-all, Mr. Warren; we never shall quarrel about that; I don't desire to wear your cassock and gown."

"I understand you, then; it is only the things that you *desire* to use that you deem it a privilege for the law to leave me."

"I am afraid we shall never agree, Mr. Warren, about this anti-rent business; and I'm very sorry for it, as I wish particularly to think as you do," glancing his eye most profanely towards Mary as he spoke. "I am for the movement-principle, while you are too much for the stand-still doctrine."

"I am certainly for remaining stationary, Mr. Newcome, if progress mean taking away the property of old and long established families in the country, to give it to those whose names are not to be found in our history; or, indeed, to give it to any but those to whom it rightfully belongs."

"We shall never agree, my dear sir, we shall never agree;" then, turning towards my uncle with the air of superiority that the vulgar so easily assume—"What do *you* say to all this, friend Dafidson—are you up-rent or down-rent?"

"Ja, mynheer," was the quiet answer; "I always downs mit der rent vens I leave a house or a garten. It is goot to pay de debts; ja, it ist herr goot."

This answer caused the clergyman and his daughter to smile, while Opportunity laughed outright.

"You won't make much of your Dutch friend, Sen," cried this buoyant young lady; "he says you ought to keep on paying rent!"

"I apprehend Mr. Dafidson does not exactly understand the case," answered Seneca, who was a good deal disconcerted, but was bent on maintaining his point. "I have understood you to say that you are a man of liberal principles, Mr. Dafidson, and that you've come to America to enjoy the light of intelligence and the benefits of a free government,"

"Ja; ven I might coome to America, I say, vell, dat 'tis a goot coontry, vhere an honest man might haf vhat he 'arns, ant keep it, too. Ja, ja! dat ist vhat I say, ant vhat I dinks."

"I understand you, sir; you come from a part of the world where the nobles eat up the fat of the land, taking the poor man's share as well as his own, to live in a country where the law is, or soon will be, so equal that no citizen will dare to talk about his *estates*, and hurt the feelin's of such as haven't got any."

My uncle so well affected an innocent perplexity at the drift of this remark as to make me smile, in spite of an effort to conceal it. Mary Warren saw that smile, and another glance of intelligence was exchanged between

us; though the young lady immediately withdrew her look, a little consciously and with a slight blush.

"I say that you like equal laws and equal privileges, friend Dafidson," continued Seneca, with emphasis; "and that you have seen too much of the evils of nobility and of feudal oppression in the old world, to wish to fall in with them in the new."

"Der noples ant der feudal privileges, ist no goot," answered the trinket-pedlar, shaking his head with an appearance of great distaste.

"Ay, I knew it would be so; you see, Mr. Warren, no man who has ever lived under a feudal system can ever feel otherwise."

"But what have we to do with feudal systems, Mr. Newcome? and what is there in common between the landlords of New York and the nobles of Europe, and between their leases and feudal tenures?"

"What is there? A vast deal too much, sir, take my word for it. Do not our very governors, even while ruthlessly calling on one citizen to murder another——"

"Nay, nay, Mr. Newcome," interrupted Mary Warren, laughing, "the governors call on the citizens *not* to murder each other."

"I understand you, Miss Mary; but we shall make anti-renters of you both before we are done. Surely, sir, there is a great deal too much resemblance between the nobles of Europe and our landlords, when the honest and free-born tenants of the last are obliged to pay tribute for permission to live on the very land that they till, and which they cause to bring forth its increase."

"But men who are not noble let their lands in Europe; nay, the very serfs, as they become free and obtain riches, buy lands and let them in some parts of the old world, as I have heard and read."

"All feudal, sir. The whole system is pernicious and feudal, serf or no serf."

"But, Mr. Newcome," said Mary Warren, quietly, though with a sort of demure irony in her manner that said she was not without humour, and understood herself very well, "even you let your land—land that you lease, too, and which you do not own, except as you hire it from Mr. Littlepage."

Seneca gave a hem, and was evidently disconcerted; but he had too much of the game of the true progressive movement—which merely means to *lead* in changes, though they may lead

to the devil—to give the matter up. Repeating the hem, more to clear his brain than to clear his throat, he hit upon his answer, and brought it out with something very like triumph.

"That is one of the evils of the present system, Miss Mary. Did I own the two or three fields you mean, and to attend to which I have no leisure, I might *sell* them; but now it is impossible, since I can give no deed. The instant my poor uncle dies—and he can't survive a week, being, as you must know, nearly gone—the whole property, mills, tavern, farms, timber-lot and all, fall in to young Hugh Littlepage, who is off frolicking in Europe, doing no good to himself or others, I'll venture to say, if the truth were known. That is another of the hardships of the feudal system; it enables one man to travel in idleness, wasting his substance in foreign lands, while it keeps another at home, at the plough-handles and the cart tail."

"And why do you suppose Mr. Hugh Littlepage wastes his substance, and is doing himself and country no good in foreign lands, Mr. Newcome? That is not at all the character I hear of him, nor is it the result that I expect to see from his travels."

"The money he spends in Europe might do a vast deal of good at Ravensnest, sir."

"For my part, my dear sir," put in Mary again, in her quiet but pungent way, "I think it remarkable that neither of our late governors has seen fit to enumerate the facts just mentioned by Mr. Newcome among those that are opposed to the spirit of the institutions. It is, indeed, a great hardship that Mr. Seneca Newcome cannot sell Mr. Hugh Littlepage's land.

"I complain less of that," cried Seneca, a little hastily, "than of the circumstance that all my rights in the property must go with the death of my uncle. *That*, at least, even you, Miss Mary, must admit is a great hardship."

"If your uncle were unexpectedly to revive, and live twenty years, Mr. Newcome——"

"No, no, Miss Mary," answered Seneca, shaking his head in a melancholy manner; "*that* is absolutely impossible. It would not surprise me to find him dead and buried on our return."

"But, admit that you may be mistaken, and that your lease should continue—you would still have a rent to pay?"

"Of that I wouldn't complain in the least. If Mr. Dunning, Littlepage's agent, will just promise, in as much as half a sentence, that we

can get a new lease on the old terms, I'd not say a syllable about it."

"Well, here is one proof that the system has its advantages!" exclaimed Mr. Warren, cheerfully. "I'm delighted to hear you say this; for it is something to have a class of men among us whose simple promises, in a matter of money, have so much value! It is to be hoped that their example will not be lost."

"Mr. Newcome has made an admission I am also glad to hear," added Mary, as soon as her father had done speaking. "His willingness to accept a new lease on the old terms is a proof that he has been living under a good bargain for himself hitherto, and that down to the present moment he has been the obliged party."

This was very simply said, but it bothered Seneca amazingly. As for myself, I was delighted with it, and could have kissed the pretty, arch creature who had just uttered the remark; though I will own that as much might have been done without any great reluctance, had she even held her tongue. As for Seneca, he did what most men are apt to do when they have the consciousness of not appearing particularly well in a given point of view; he

endeavoured to present himself to the eyes of his companions in another.

"There is one thing, Mr. Warren, that I think you will admit ought not to be," he cried, exultingly, "whatever Miss Mary thinks about it; and that is, that the Littlepage pew in your church ought to come down."

"I will not say that much, Mr. Newcome, though I rather think my daughter will. I believe, my dear, you are of Mr. Newcome's way of thinking in respect to this canopied pew, and also in respect to the old hatchments?"

"I wish neither was in the church," answered Mary, in a low voice.

From that moment I was fully resolved neither should be, as soon as I got into a situation to control the matter.

"In that I agree with you entirely, my child," resumed the clergyman; "and were it not for this movement connected with the rents, and the false principles that have been so boldly announced of late years, I might have taken on myself the authority, as rector, to remove the hatchments. Even according to the laws connected with the use of such things, they should have been taken away a generation or two back. As to the pew, it is a different matter. It is

private property; was constructed with the church, which was built itself by the joint liberality of the Littlepages and mother Trinity; and it would be a most ungracious act to undertake to destroy it under such circumstances, and more especially in the absence of its owner."

"You agree, however, that it ought not to be there?" asked Seneca, with exultation.

"I wish with all my heart it were not. I dislike every thing like worldly distinction in the house of God; and heraldic emblems, in particular, seem to me very much out of place where the cross is seen to be in its proper place."

"Wa-all, now, Mr. Warren, I can't say I much fancy crosses about churches either. What's the use in raising vain distinctions of any sort. A church is but a house, after all, and ought so to be regarded."

"True," said Mary, firmly; "but the house of God."

"Yes, yes, we all know, Miss Mary, that you Episcopalians look more at outward things, and more respect outward things, than most of the other denominations of the country."

"Do you call leases 'outward things,' Mr.

Newcome?" asked Mary, archly; "and contracts, and bargains, and promises, and the rights of property, and the obligation to 'do as you would be done by?'"

"Law! good folks," cried Opportunity, who had been all this time tumbling over the trinkets, "I wish it was 'down with the rent' for ever, with all my heart; and that not another word might ever be said on the subject. Here is one of the prettiest pencils, Mary, I ever did see; and its price is only four dollars. I wish, Sen, you'd let the rent alone, and make me a present of this very pencil."

As this was an act of which Seneca had not the least intention of being guilty, he merely shifted his hat from one side of his head to the other, began to whistle, and then he coolly left the room. My uncle Ro profited by the occasion to beg Miss Opportunity would do him the honour to accept the pencil as an offering from himself.

"You an't surely in earnest!" exclaimed Opportunity, flushing up with surprise and pleasure. "Why, you told me the price was four dollars; and even that seems to me desperate little!"

"Dat ist de price to anudder," said the

gallant trinket-dealer; "but dat ist not de price to you, Miss Opportunity. Ve shall trafel togedder; ant vhen ve gets to your coontry, you vill dell me de best houses vhere I might go mit my vatches ant drinkets."

"That I will; and get you in at the Nest House, in the bargain," cried Opportunity, pocketing the pencil without further parley.

In the mean time my uncle selected a very neat seal, the handsomest he had, being of pure metal, and having a real topaz in it, and offered it to Mary Warren, with his best bow. I watched the clergyman's daughter with anxiety, as I witnessed the progress of this *galantérie*, doubting and hoping at each change of the ingenuous and beautiful countenance of her to whom the offering was made. Mary coloured, smiled, seemed embarrassed, and, as I feared, for a single moment doubting; but I must have been mistaken, as she drew back, and, in the sweetest manner possible, declined to accept the present. I saw that Opportunity's having just adopted a different course added very much to her embarrassment, as otherwise she might have said something to lessen the seeming ungraciousness of the refusal. Luckily for herself, however, she had a gentleman to deal with,

instead of one in the station that my uncle Ro had voluntarily assumed. When this offering was made, the pretended pedlar was ignorant altogether of the true characters of the clergyman and his daughter, not even knowing that he saw the rector of St. Andrew's, Ravensnest. But the manner of Mary at once disabused him of an error into which he had fallen through her association with Opportunity, and he now drew back himself with perfect tact, bowing and apologizing in a way that I thought must certainly betray his disguise. It did not, however; for Mr. Warren, with a smile that denoted equally satisfaction at his daughter's conduct, and a grateful sense of the other's intended liberality, but with a simplicity that was of proof, turned to me and begged a tune on the flute which I had drawn from my pocket and was holding in my hand, as expecting some such invitation.

If I have any accomplishment, it is connected with music; and particularly with the management of the flute. On this occasion I was not at all backward about showing off, and I executed two or three airs, from the best masters, with as much care as if I had been playing to a

salon in one of the best quarters of Paris. I could see that Mary and her father were both surprised at the execution, and that the first was delighted. We had a most agreeable quarter of an hour together; and might have had two, had not Opportunity—who was certainly well named, being apropos of everything—began of her own accord to sing, though not without inviting Mary to join her. As the latter declined this public exhibition, as well as my uncle Ro's offering, Seneca's sister had it all to herself; and she sang no less than three songs, in quick succession, and altogether unasked. I shall not stop to characterize the music or the words of these songs, any further than to say they were all, more or less, of the Jim Crow school, and executed in a way that did them ample justice.

As it was understood that we were all to travel in the same train, the interview lasted until we were ready to proceed; nor did it absolutely terminate then. As Mary and Opportunity sat together, Mr. Warren asked me to share his seat, regardless of the hurdy-gurdy; though my attire, in addition to its being

perfectly new and neat, was by no means of the mean character that it is usual to see adorning street-music in general. On the whole, so long as the instrument was not *on evidence*, I might not have seemed very much out of place seated at Mr. Warren's side. In this manner we proceeded to Saratoga; my uncle keeping up a private discourse the whole way with Seneca, on matters connected with the rent movement.

As for the divine and myself, we had also much interesting talk together. I was questioned about Europe in general, and Germany in particular; and had reason to think my answers gave surprise as well as satisfaction. It was not an easy matter to preserve the Doric of my assumed dialect, though practice and fear contributed their share to render me content to resort to it. I made many mistakes, of course, but my listeners were not the persons to discover them. I say my listeners, for I soon ascertained that Mary Warren, who sat on the seat directly before us, was a profoundly attentive listener to all that passed. This circumstance did not render me the less communicative, though it did increase the desire I felt to render

what I said worthy of such a listener. As for Opportunity, she read a newspaper a little while, munched an apple a very little while, and slept the rest of the way. But the journey between modern Troy and Saratoga is not a long one, and was soon accomplished.

CHAPTER VII.

"I will tell you;
If you'll bestow a small (of what you have little),
Patience, a while, you'll hear the belly's answer."
MENENIUS AGRIPPA.

At the springs we parted, Mr. Warren and his friends finding a conveyance, with their own horses, in readiness to carry them the remainder of the distance. As for my uncle and myself, it was understood that we were to get on in the best manner we could, it being expected that we should reach Ravensnest in the course of a day or two. According to the theory of our new business, we ought to travel on foot, but we had a reservation *in petto* that promised us also the relief of a comfortable wagon of some sort or other.

"Well," said my uncle, the moment we had got far enough from our new acquaintances to be out of ear-shot, "I must say one thing in

behalf of Mr. Seneky, as he calls himself, or Sen, as his elegant sister calls him, and that is, that I believe him to be one of the biggest scoundrels the State holds."

"This is not drawing his character *en beau*," I answered, laughing. "But why do you come out so decidedly upon him at this particular moment?"

"Because this particular moment happens to be the first in which I have had an opportunity to say anything since I have known the rascal. You must have remarked that the fellow held me in discourse from the time we left Troy until we stopped here."

"Certainly; I could see that his tongue was in motion unceasingly: what he said, I have to conjecture."

"He said enough to lay bare his whole character. Our subject was anti-rent, which he commenced with a view to explain it to a foreigner; but I managed to lead him on, step by step, until he let me into all his notions and expectations on the subject. Why, Hugh, the villain actually proposed that you and I should enlist, and turn ourselves into two of the rascally mock redskins."

"Enlist! Do they still persevere so far as to

keep up that organization in the very teeth of the late law?"

"The law! What do two or three thousand voters care for any penal law, in a country like this? Who is to enforce the law against them? Did they commit murder, and were they even convicted, as *might* happen under the excitement of such a crime, they very well know nobody would be hanged. Honesty is always too passive in matters that do not immediately press on its direct interests. It is for the interest of every honest man in the State to set his face against this anti-rent movement, and to do all he can, by his vote and influence, to put it down into the dirt, out of which it sprang, and into which it should be crushed; but not one in a hundred, even of those who condemn it *toto cœlo*, will go a foot out of their way even to impede its progress. All depends on those who have the power; and they will exert that power so as to conciliate the active rogue, rather than protect the honest man. You are to remember that the laws are executed here on the principle that 'what is everybody's business is nobody's business.'"

"You surely do not believe that the authorities will wink at an open violation of the laws!"

"That will depend on the characters of

individuals; most will, but some will not. You and I would be punished soon enough, were there a chance, but the mass would escape. Oh! we have had some precious disclosures in our corner of the car! The two or three men who joined Newcome are from anti-rent districts, and seeing me with their friend, little reserve has been practised. One of those men is an anti-rent lecturer; and, being somewhat didactic, he favoured me with some of his arguments, *seriatim*."

"How! Have they got to lectures? I should have supposed the newspapers would have been the means of circulating their ideas."

"Oh, the newspapers, like hogs swimming too freely, have cut their own throats; and it seems to be fashionable, just at this moment, not to believe them. Lecturing is the great moral lever of the nation at present."

"But a man can lie in a lecture, as well as in a newspaper."

"Out of all question; and if many of the lecturers are of the school of this Mr. Holmes —'Lecturer Holmes,' as Seneca called him— but, if many are of *his* school, a pretty set of liberty-takers with the truth must they be."

"You detected him, then, in some of these liberties?"

"In a hundred: nothing was easier than for a man in my situation to do that; knowing, as I did, so much of the history of the land-titles of the State. One of his arguments partakes so largely of the weak side of our system, that I must give it to you. He spoke of the gravity of the disturbances—of the importance to the peace and character of the State of putting an end to them; and then, by way of corollary to his proposition, produced a scheme for changing the titles, IN ORDER TO SATISFY THE PEOPLE!"

"The people, of course, meaning the tenants; the landlords and *their* rights passing for nothing."

"That is one beautiful feature of the morality —an eye, or a cheek, if you will—but here is the *nose*, and highly Roman it is. A certain portion of the community wish to get rid of the obligations of their contracts; and finding it cannot be done by law, they resort to means that are opposed to all law, in order to effect their purposes. Public law-breakers, violators of the public peace, they make use of their own wrong as an argument for perpetuating another that can be perpetuated in no other way. I

have been looking over some of the papers containing proclamations, &c., and find that both law-makers and law-breakers are of one mind as to this charming policy. Without a single manly effort to put down the atrocious wrong that is meditated, the existence of the wrong itself is made an argument for meeting it with concessions, and thus sustaining it. Instead of using the means the institutions have provided for putting down all such unjust and illegal combinations, the combinations are a sufficient reason of themselves why the laws should be altered, and wrong be done to a few, in order that many may be propitiated, and their votes secured."

"This is reasoning that can be used only where real grievances exist. But there are no real grievances in the case of the tenants. They may mystify weak heads in the instance of the Manor leases, with their quarter sales, fat hens, loads of wood, and days' works; but my leases are all on three lives, with rent payable in money, and with none of the conditions that are called feudal, though no more feudal than any other bargain to pay articles in kind. One might just as well call a bargain made by a butcher to deliver pork for a series of years

feudal. However, feudal or not, my leases, and those of most other landlords, are running on lives; and yet, by what I can learn, the discontent is general; and the men who have solemnly bargained to give up their farms at the expiration of the lives are just as warm for the 'down-rent' and titles in fee, as the manor tenants themselves! They say that the obligations given for actual purchases are beginning to be discredited."

"You are quite right; and there is one of the frauds practised on the world at large. In the public documents only the Manor leases, with their pretended feudal covenants and their perpetuity, are kept in view, while the combination goes to *all* leases, or nearly all, and certainly to all *sorts* of leases, where the estates are of sufficient extent to allow of the tenants to make head against the landlords. I dare say there are hundreds of tenants, even on the property of the Rensselaers, who are honest enough to be willing to comply with their contracts if the conspirators would let them; but the rapacious spirit is abroad among the occupants of other lands, as well as among the occupants of theirs, and the government considers its existence a proof that concessions

should be made. The discontented must be appeased, right or not!"

"Did Seneca say anything on the subject of his own interests?"

"He did; not so much in conversation with me, as in the discourse he held with 'Lecturer Holmes.' I listened attentively, happening to be familiar, through tradition and through personal knowledge, with all the leading facts of the case. As you will soon be called on to act in that matter for yourself, I may as well relate them to you. They will serve, also, as guides to the moral merits of the occupation of half the farms on your estate. These are things, moreover, you would never know by public statements, since all the good bargains are smothered in silence, while those that may possibly have been a little unfavourable to the tenant are proclaimed far and near. It is quite possible that, among the many thousands of leased farms that are to be found in the State, some bad bargains may have been made by the tenants; but what sort of a government is that which should undertake to redress evils of this nature? If either of the Rensselaers, or you yourself, were to venture to send a memorial to the Legislature, setting forth the grievances *you*

labour under in connexion with this very 'mill lot'—and serious losses do they bring to you, let me tell you, though grievances, in the proper sense of the term, they are not—you and your memorial would be met with a general and merited shout of ridicule and derision. *One* man has no rights, as opposed to a dozen."

"So much difference is there between '*de la Rochefoucauld et de la Rochefoucauld.*"

"All the difference in the world: but let me give you the facts, for they will serve as a rule by which to judge of many others. In the first place, my great-grandfather, Mordaunt, the 'patentee,' as he was called, first let the mill lot to the grandfather of this Seneca, the tenant then being quite a young man. In order to obtain settlers, in that early day, it was necessary to give them great advantages, for there was vastly more land than there were people to work it. The first lease, therefore, was granted on highly advantageous terms to that Jason Newcome, whom I can just remember. He had two characters; the one, and the true, which set him down as a covetous, envious, narrow-minded provincial, who was full of cant and roguery. Some traditions exist among us of his having been detected in stealing timber, and

in various other frauds. In public he is one of those virtuous and hard-working pioneers who have transmitted to their descendants all their claims, those that are supposed to be moral, as well as those that are known to be legal. This flummery may do for elderly ladies, who affect snuff and bohea, and for some men who have minds of the same calibre, but they are not circumstances to influence such legislators and executives as are fit to be legislators and executives. Not a great while before my father's marriage, the said Jason still living and in possession, the lease expired, and a new one was granted for three lives, or twenty-one years certain; of which one of the lives is still running. That lease was granted, on terms highly favourable to the tenant, sixty years since, old Newcome, luckily for himself and his posterity, having named this long-lived son as one of his three lives. Now Seneky, God bless him! is known to lease a few of the lots that have fallen to his share of the property for more money than is required to meet all your rent on the whole. Such, in effect, has been the fact with that mill-lot for the last thirty years, or even longer; and the circumstance of the great length of time so excellent a bargain has existed, is

used as an argument why the Newcomes ought to have a deed of the property for a nominal price; or, indeed, for no price at all, if the tenants could have their wishes."

"I am afraid there is nothing unnatural in thus perverting principles; half mankind appear to me really to get a great many of their notions *dessus dessous*."

"Half is a small proportion; as you will find, my boy, when you grow older. But was it not an impudent proposal of Seneca, when he wished you and me to join the corps of 'Injins?'"

"What answer did you make? Though I suppose it would hardly do for us to go disguised and armed, now that the law makes it a felony, even while our motive, at the bottom, might be to aid the law."

"Catch me at that act of folly! Why, Hugh, could they prove such a crime on either of *us*, or any one connected with an old landed family, we should be the certain victims. No governor would dare pardon *us*. No, no; clemency is a word reserved for the obvious and confirmed rogues."

"We might get a little favour on the score of belonging to a very powerful body of offenders."

"True; I forgot that circumstance. The more numerous the crimes and the criminals, the greater the probability of impunity; and this, too, not on the general principle that power cannot be resisted, but on the particular principle that a thousand or two votes are of vast importance, where three thousand can turn an election. God only knows where this thing is to end!"

We now approached one of the humbler taverns of the place, where it was necessary for those of our apparent pretensions to seek lodgings, and the discourse was dropped. It was several weeks too early in the season for the Springs to be frequented, and we found only a few of those in the place who drank the waters because they really required them. My uncle had been an old stager at Saratoga —a beau of the "purest water," as he laughingly described himself — and he was enabled to explain all that it was necessary for me to know. An American watering-place, however, is so very much inferior to most of those in Europe, as to furnish very little, in their best moments, beyond the human beings they contain, to attract the attention of the traveller.

In the course of the afternoon we availed

ourselves of the opportunity of a return vehicle to go as far as Sandy Hill, where we passed the night. The next morning, bright and early, we got into a hired wagon and drove across the country until near night, when we paid for our passage, sent the vehicle back, and sought a tavern. At this house, where we passed the night, we heard a good deal of the "Injins" having made their appearance on the Littlepage lands, and many conjectures as to the probable result. We were in a township, or rather on a property that was called Mooseridge, and which had once belonged to us, but which, having been sold, and in a great measure paid for by the occupants, no one thought of impairing the force of the covenants under which the parties held. The most trivial observer will soon discover that it is only when something is to be gained that the aggrieved citizen wishes to disturb a covenant. Now, I never heard any one say a syllable against either of the covenants of his lease, under which he held his farm, let him be ever so loud against those which would shortly compel him to give it up! Had I complained of the fact—and such facts abounded—that my predecessors had incautiously let farms at such low prices that the lessees had been

enabled to pay the rents for half a century by subletting small portions of them, as my uncle Ro had intimated, I should be pointed at as a fool. "Stick to your bond!" would have been the cry, and "Shylock" would have been forgotten. I do not say that there is not a vast difference between the means of acquiring intelligence, the cultivation, the manners, the social conditions, and, in some senses, the social obligations of an affluent landlord and a really hard-working, honest, well-intentioned husbandman, his tenant,—differences that should dispose the liberal and cultivated gentleman to bear in mind the advantages he has, perhaps, inherited, and not acquired by his own means, in such a way as to render him, in a certain degree, the repository of the interests of those who hold under him; but, while I admit all this, and say that the community which does not possess such a class of men is to be pitied, as it loses one of the most certain means of liberalizing and enlarging its notions, and of improving its civilization, I am far from thinking that the men of this class are to have their real superiority of position, with its consequences, thrown into their faces only when they are expected to give, while they are grudgingly denied it on all other occasions!

There is nothing so likely to advance the habits, opinions, and true interests of a rural population, as to have them all directed by the intelligence and combined interests that ought to mark the connexion between landlord and tenant. It may do for one class of political economists to prate about a state of things which supposes every husbandman a freeholder, and rich enough to maintain his level among the other freeholders of the State. But we all know that as many minute gradations in means must and do exist in a community, as there exists gradations in characters. A majority soon will, in the nature of things, be below the level of the freeholder, and by destroying the system of having landlords and tenants, two great evils are created,—the one preventing men of large fortunes from investing in lands, as no man will place his money where it will be insecure or profitless, thereby cutting off real estate generally from the benefits that might be and would be conferred by their capital, as well as cutting it off from the benefits of the increased price which arise from having such buyers in the market; and the other is, to prevent any man from being a husbandman who has not the

money necessary to purchase a farm. But they who want farms *now*, and they who will want votes next November, do not look quite so far ahead as that, while shouting "equal rights," they are, in fact, for preventing the poor husbandman from being any thing but a day-labourer.

We obtained tolerably decent lodgings at our inn, though the profoundest patriot America possesses, if he know anything of other countries, or of the best materials of his own, cannot say much in favour of the sleeping arrangements of an ordinary country inn. The same money and the same trouble would render that which is now the very *beau idéal* of discomfort, at least tolerable, and in many instances good. But who is to produce this reform? According to the opinions circulated among us, the humblest hamlet we have has already attained the highest point of civilization: and as for the people, without distinction of classes, it is universally admitted that they are the best educated, the acutest, and the most intelligent in Christendom:—no, I must correct myself; they are all this, except when they are in the act of leasing lands, and then the innocent and

illiterate husbandmen are the victims of the arts of designing landlords, the wretches!*

We passed an hour on the piazza, after eating our supper, and there being a collection of men assembled there, inhabitants of the hamlet, we had an opportunity to get into communication with them. My uncle sold a watch, and I

* Mr. Hugh Littlepage writes a little sharply, but there is truth in all he says, at the bottom. His tone is probably produced by the fact that there is so serious an attempt to deprive him of his old paternal estate, an attempt which is receiving support in high quarters. In addition to this provocation, the Littlepages, as the manuscript shows farther on, are traduced, as one means of effecting the objects of the anti-renters; no man, in any community in which it is necessary to work on public sentiment in order to accomplish such a purpose, ever being wronged without being calumniated. As respects the inns, truth compels me, as an old traveller, to say that Mr. Littlepage has much reason for what he says. I have met with a better bed in the lowest French tavern I ever was compelled to use, and in one instance I slept in an inn frequented by carters, than in the best purely country inn in America. In the way of neatness, however, more is usually to be found in our New York village taverns than in the public hotels of Paris itself. As for the hit touching the intelligence of the people, it is merited; for I have myself heard subtle distinctions drawn to show that the "people" of a former generation were not as knowing as the "people" of this, and imputing the covenants of the older leases to that circumstance, instead of imputing them to their true cause, the opinions and practices of the times. Half a century's experience would induce me to say that the "people" were never particularly dull in making a bargain.—EDITOR.

played on the hurdy-gurdy, by way of making myself popular. After this beginning, the discourse turned on the engrossing subject of the day, anti-rentism. The principal speaker was a young man of about six-and-twenty, of a sort of shabby genteel air and appearance, whom I soon discovered to be the attorney of the neighbourhood. His name was Hubbard, while that of the other principal speaker was Hall. The last was a mechanic, as I ascertained, and was a plain-looking working-man of middle age. Each of these persons seated himself on a common "kitchen chair," leaning back against the side of the house, and, of course, resting on the two hind legs of the rickety support, while he placed his own feet on the rounds in front. The attitudes were neither graceful nor picturesque, but they were so entirely common as to excite no surprise. As for Hall, he appeared perfectly contented with his situation, after fidgeting a little to get the two supporting legs of his chair just where he wanted them; but Hubbard's eye was restless, uneasy, and even menacing, for more than a minute. He drew a knife from his pocket—a small, neat penknife only, it is true—gazed a little wildly about him, and just as I thought he intended

to abandon his nicely poised chair, and to make an assault on one of the pillars that upheld the roof of the piazza, the innkeeper advanced, holding in his hand several narrow slips of pine board, one of which he offered at once to 'Squire Hubbard. This relieved the attorney, who took the wood, and was soon deeply plunged in, to me, the unknown delights of whittling. I cannot explain the mysterious pleasure that so many find in whittling, though the prevalence of the custom is so well known. But I cannot explain the pleasure so many find in chewing tobacco, or in smoking. The precaution of the landlord was far from being unnecessary, and appeared to be taken in good part by all to whom he offered "whittling-pieces," some six or eight in the whole. The state of the piazza, indeed, proved that the precaution was absolutely indispensable, if he did not wish to see the house come tumbling down about his head. In order that those who have never seen such things may understand their use, I will go a little out of the way to explain.

The inn was of wood, a hemlock frame with a "siding" of clap-boards. In this there was nothing remarkable, many countries of Europe, even, still building principally of wood. Houses

of lath and plaster were quite common, until within a few years, even in large towns. I remember to have seen some of these constructions, while in London, in close connexion with the justly celebrated Westminster Hall; and of such materials is the much-talked-of miniature castle of Horace Walpole, at Strawberry Hill. But the inn of Mooseridge had some pretensions to architecture, besides being three or four times larger than any other house in the place. A piazza it enjoyed, of course; it must be a pitiful village inn that does not: and building, accessaries and all, rejoiced in several coats of a spurious white lead. The columns of this piazza, as well as the clap-boards of the house itself, however, exhibited the proofs of the danger of abandoning your true whittler to his own instincts. Spread-eagles, five-points, American flags, huzzahs for Polk! the initials of names, and names at full length, with various other similar conceits, records, and ebullitions of patriotic or party-otic feelings, were scattered up and down with an affluence that said volumes in favour of the mint in which they had been coined. But the most remarkable memorial of the industry of the guests was to be found on one of the columns; and it was one at a cor-

ner, too, and consequently of double importance to the superstructure—unless, indeed, the house were built on that well-known principle of American architecture of the last century, which made the architrave uphold the pillar, instead of the pillar the architrave. The column in question was of white pine, as usual—though latterly, in brick edifices, bricks and stucco are much resorted to—and, at a convenient height for the whittlers, it was literally cut two-thirds in two. The gash was very neatly made—that much must be said for it—indicating skill and attention; and the surfaces of the wound were smoothed in a manner to prove that appearances were not neglected.

"Vat do das?" I asked of the landlord, pointing to this gaping wound in the main column of his piazza.

"That! Oh! That's only the whittlers," answered the host, with a good-natured smile.

Assuredly the Americans *are* the best-natured people on earth! Here was a man whose house was nearly tumbling down about his ears —always bating the principle in architecture just named—and he could smile as Nero may be supposed to have done when fiddling over the conflagration of Rome.

"But vhy might de vhittler vhittle down your house?"

"Oh! this is a free country, you know, and folks do pretty much as they like in it," returned the still smiling host. "I let 'em cut away as long as I dared, but it was high time to get out 'whittling-pieces,' I believe you must own. It's best always to keep a ruff (roof) over a man's head, to be ready for bad weather. A week longer would have had the column in two."

"Vell, I dinks I might not bear dat! Vhat ist mein house ist mein house, ant dey shall not so moch vittles."

"By letting 'em so much vittles there, they so much vittles in the kitchen; so you see there is policy in having your under-pinnin' knocked away sometimes, if its done by the right sort of folks."

"You're a stranger in these parts, friend?" observed Hubbard, complacently, for by this time his "whittling-piece" was reduced to a shape, and he could go on reducing it, according to some law of the art of whittling, with which I am not acquainted. "We are not so particular in such matters as in some of your countries in the old world."

"Ja—das I can see. But does not woot ant column cost money in America, someding?"

"To be sure it does. There is not a man in the country who would undertake to replace that pillar with a new one, paint and all, for less than ten dollars."

This was an opening for a discussion on the probable cost of putting a new pillar into the place of the one that was injured. Opinions differed, and quite a dozen spoke on the subject; some placing the expense as high as fifteen dollars, and others bringing it down as low as five. I was struck with the quiet and self-possession with which each man delivered his opinion, as well as with the language used. The accent was uniformly provincial, that of Hubbard included, having a strong and unpleasant taint of the dialect of New England in it; and some of the expressions savoured a little of the stilts of the newspapers; but, on the whole, the language was sufficiently accurate and surprisingly good, considering the class in life of the speakers. The conjectures, too, manifested great shrewdness and familiarity with practical things, as well as, in a few instances, some reading. Hall, however, actually surprised me. He spoke with a precision and knowledge of mechanics that

would have done credit to a scholar, and with a simplicity that added to the influence of what he said. Some casual remark induced me to put in—"Vell, I might s'pose an Injin voult cut so das column, but I might not s'pose a vhite man could." This opinion gave the discourse a direction towards anti-rentism, and in a few minutes it caught all the attention of my uncle Ro and myself.

"This business is going ahead after all!" observed Hubbard, evasively, after others had had their say.

"More's the pity," put in Hall. "It might have been put an end to in a month, at any time, and ought to be put an end to in a civilized land."

"You will own, neighbour Hall," notwithstanding, it would be a great improvement in the condition of the tenants all over the State, could they change their tenures into freeholds."

"No doubt 'twould; and so it would be a great improvement in the condition of any journeyman in my shop if he could get to be the boss. But that is not the question here; the question is, what right has the State to say any man shall sell his property unless he wishes to

sell it? A pretty sort of liberty we should have if we all held our houses and gardens under such laws as that supposes!"

"But do we not all hold our houses and gardens, and farms, too, by some such law?" rejoined the attorney, who evidently respected his antagonist, and advanced his own opinions cautiously. "If the public wants land to use, it can take it by paying for it."

"Yes, to *use;* but use is everything. I've read that old report of the committee of the House, and don't subscribe to its doctrines at all. Public 'policy,' in that sense, doesn't at all mean public 'use.' If land is wanted for a road, or a fort, or a canal, it must be taken, under a law, by appraisement, or the thing could not be had at all; but to pretend, because one side to a contract wishes to alter it, that the state has a right to interfere, on the ground that the discontented can be bought off in this way easier and cheaper than they can be made to obey the laws, is but a poor way of supporting the right. The same principle, carried out, might prove it would be easier to buy off pickpockets by compromising than to punish them. Or it would be easy to get round all sorts of contracts in this way."

"But all governments use this power when it becomes necessary, neighbour Hall."

"That word *necessary* covers a great deal of ground, 'Squire Hubbard. The most that can be made of the necessity here is to say it is cheaper, and may help along parties to their objects better. No man doubts that the State of New York can put down these anti-renters; and, I trust, *will* put them down, so far as force is concerned. There is, then, no other necessity in the case, to begin with, than the necessity which demagogues always feel, of getting as many votes as they can."

"After all, neighbour Hall, these votes are pretty powerful weapons in a popular government."

"I'll not deny that; and now they talk of a convention to alter the constitution, it is a favourable moment to teach such managers they shall not abuse the right of suffrage in this way."

"How is it to be prevented? You are an universal suffrage man, I know!"

"Yes, I'm for universal suffrage among honest folks; but do not wish to have my rulers chosen by them that are never satisfied without having their hands in their neighbours' pockets.

Let 'em put a clause into the constitution providing that no town, or village, or county shall hold a poll within a given time after the execution of process has been openly resisted in it. That would take the conceit out of all such law-breakers, in very short order."

It was plain that this idea struck the listeners, and several even avowed their approbation of the scheme aloud. Hubbard received it as a new thought, but was more reluctant to admit its practicability. As might be expected from a lawyer accustomed to practice in a small way, his objections savoured more of narrow views than of the notions of a statesman.

"How would you determine the extent of the district to be disfranchised?" he asked.

"Take the legal limits as they stand. If process be resisted openly by a combination strong enough to look down the agents of the law in a town, disfranchise that town for a given period; if in more than one town, disfranchise the offending towns; if a county, disfranchise the whole county."

"But, in that way you would punish the innocent with the guilty."

"It would be for the good of all; besides, you punish the innocent for the guilty, or *with*

the guilty rather, in a thousand ways. You and I are taxed to keep drunkards from starving, because it is better to do that than to offend humanity by seeing men die of hunger, or tempting them to steal. When you declare martial law you punish the innocent with the guilty, in one sense; and so you do in a hundred cases. All we have to ask is, if it be not wiser and better to disarm demagogues, and those disturbers of the public peace who wish to pervert their right of suffrage to so wicked an end, by so simple a process, than to suffer them to effect their purposes by the most flagrant abuse of their political privileges?"

"How would you determine *when* a town should lose the right of voting?"

"By evidence given in open court. The judges would be the proper authority to decide, in such a case; and they would decide, beyond all question, nineteen times in twenty, right. It is the interest of every man who is desirous of exercising the suffrage on right principles, to give him some such protection against them that wish to exercise the suffrage on wrong. A peace-officer can call on the *posse comitatus* or on the people to aid him; if enough appear to put down the rebels, well and good; but if

enough do not appear, let it be taken as proof that the district is not worthy of giving the votes of freemen. They who abuse such a liberty as man enjoys in this country are the least entitled to our sympathies. As for the mode, that could easily be determined, as soon as you settled the principle."

The discourse went on for an hour, neighbour Hall giving his opinions still more at large. I listened equally with pleasure and surprise. "These, then, after all," I said to myself, "are the real bone and sinew of the country. There are tens of thousands of this sort of men in the State, and why should they be domineered over, and made to submit to a legislation and to practices that are so often without principle, by the agents of the worst part of the community? Will the honest for ever be so passive, while the corrupt and dishonest contine so active?" On my mentioning these notions to my uncle, he answered:—

"Yes; it ever has been so, and, I fear, ever will be so. *There* is the curse of this country," pointing to a table covered with newspapers, the invariable companion of an American inn of any size. "So long as men believe what they find *there*, they can be nothing but dupes or knaves."

"But there is good in newspapers."

"That adds to the curse. If they were nothing but lies, the world would soon reject them; but how few are able to separate the true from the false! Now, how few of these papers speak the truth about this very anti-rentism! Occasionally an honest man in the corps does come out; but where one does this, ten affect to think what they do not believe, in order to secure votes;—votes, votes, votes. In that simple word lies all the mystery of the matter."

"Jefferson said, if he were to choose between a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, he would take the last."

"Ay, Jefferson did not mean newspapers as they are now. I am old enough to see the change that has taken place. In his day three or four fairly convicted lies would damn any editor; now there are men that stand up under a thousand. I'll tell you what, Hugh, this country is jogging on under two of the most antagonist systems possible—Christianity and the newspapers. The first is daily hammering into every man that he is a miserable, frail, good-for-nothing being, while the last is eter-

nally proclaiming the perfection of the people and the virtues of self-government."

"Perhaps too much stress ought not to be laid on either."

"The first is certainly true, under limitations that we all understand; but as to the last, I will own I want more evidence than a newspaper eulogy to believe it."

After all, my uncle Ro is sometimes mistaken; though candour compels me to acknowledge that he is very often right.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I see thee still;
Remembrance, faithful to her trust,
Calls thee in beauty from the dust;
Thou comest in the morning light,
Thou 'rt with me through the gloomy night;
In dreams I meet thee as of old:
Then thy soft arms my neck enfold,
And thy sweet voice is in my ear:
In every sense to memory dear
I see thee still."

SPRAGUE.

IT was just ten in the morning of the succeeding day when my uncle Ro and myself came in sight of the old house at the Nest. I call it *old*, for a dwelling that has stood more than half a century acquires a touch of the venerable, in a country like America. To me it was truly old, the building having stood there, where I then saw it, for a period more than twice as long as that of my own existence, and was associated with all my early ideas. From childhood I had regarded that place as my future home, as it had been the home of my

parents and grand-parents, and in one sense, of those who had gone before them for two generations more. The whole of the land in sight —the rich bottoms, then waving with grass— the side-hills, the woods, the distant mountains —the orchards, dwellings, barns, and all the other accessaries of rural life that appertained to the soil, were mine, and had thus become without a single act of injustice to any human being, so far as I knew and believed. Even the red man had been fairly bought off by Herman Mordaunt, the patentee, and so Susquesus, the Redskin of Ravensnest, as our old Onondago was often called, had ever admitted the fact to be. It was natural that I should love an estate thus inherited and thus situated. No CIVILISED MAN, NO MAN, INDEED, SAVAGE OR NOT, HAD EVER BEEN THE OWNER OF THOSE BROAD ACRES, BUT THOSE WHO WERE OF MY OWN BLOOD. This is what few besides Americans *can* say; and when it can be said truly, in parts of the country where the arts of life have spread, and amid the blessings of civilization, it becomes the foundation of a sentiment so profound, that I do not wonder those adventurers-errant who are flying about the face of the country, thrusting their hands into every man's

mess, have not been able to find it among their other superficial discoveries. Nothing can be less like the ordinary cravings of avarice than the feeling that is thus engendered; and I am certain that the general tendency of such an influence is to elevate the feelings of him who experiences it.

And there were men among us, high in political station—high as such men ever can get, for the consequence of having such men in power is to draw down station itself nearer to their own natural level—but men in power had actually laid down propositions in political economy which, if carried out, would cause me to sell all that estate, reserving, perhaps, a single farm for my own use, and reinvest the money in such a way as that the interest I obtained might equal my present income! It is true, this theory was not directly applied to me, as my farms were to fall in by the covenants of their leases, but it had been directly applied to Stephen and William Van Rennselaer, and, by implication, to others; and my turn might come next. What business had the Rensselaers, or the Livingstons, or the Hunters, or the Littlepages, or the Verplancks, or the Morgans, or the Wadsworths, or five hundred others simi-

larly placed, to entertain "sentiments" that interfered with "business," or that interfered with the wishes of any straggling Yankee who had found his way out of New England, and wanted a particular farm on his own terms? It is aristocratic to put sentiment in opposition to trade; and TRADE ITSELF IS NOT TO BE TRADE ANY LONGER THAN ALL THE PROFIT IS TO BE FOUND ON THE SIDE OF NUMBERS. Even the principles of holy trade are to be governed by majorities!

Even my uncle Ro, who never owned a foot of the property, could not look at it without emotion. He too had been born there—had passed his childhood there—and loved the spot without a particle of the grovelling feeling of avarice. He took pleasure in remembering that our race had been the only owners of the soil on which he stood, and had that very justifiable pride which belongs to enduring respectability and social station.

"Well, Hugh," he cried, after both of us had stood gazing at the grey walls of the good and substantial, but certainly not very beautiful dwelling, "here we are, and we now may determine on what is next to be done. Shall we march down to the village, which is four miles

distant, you will remember, and get our breakfasts there?—shall we try one of your tenants?—or shall we plunge at once *in medias res*, and ask hospitality of my mother and your sister?"

"The last might excite suspicion, I fear, sir. Tar and feathers would be our mildest fate, did we fall into the hands of the Injins."

"Injins! Why not go at once to the wigwam of Susquesus, and get out of him and Yop the history of the state of things. I heard them speaking of the Onondago at our tavern last night, and while they said he was generally thought to be much more than a hundred, that he was still like a man of eighty. That Indian is full of observation, and may let us into some of the secrets of his brethren."

"They can at least give us the news from the family; and though it might seem in the course of things for pedlars to visit the Nest House, it will be just as much so for them to halt at the wigwam."

This consideration decided the matter, and away we went towards the ravine or glen, on the side of which stood the primitive-looking hut that went by the name of the "wigwam." The house was a small cabin of logs, neat and warm, or cool, as the season demanded.

As it was kept up, and was whitewashed, and occasionally furnished anew by the landlord—the odious creature! he who paid for so many similar things in the neighbourhood—it was never unfit to be seen, though never of a very alluring, cottage-like character. There was a garden, and it had been properly made that very season, the negro picking and pecking about it, during the summer, in a way to coax the vegetables and fruits on a little, though I well knew that the regular weedings came from an assistant at the Nest, who was ordered to give it an eye and an occasional half-day. On one side of the hut there was a hog-pen and a small stable for a cow; but on the other the trees of the virgin forest, which had never been disturbed in that glen, overshadowed the roof. This somewhat poetical arrangement was actually the consequence of a compromise between the tenants of the cabin, the negro insisting on the accessories of his rude civilization, while the Indian required the shades of the woods to reconcile him to his position. Here had these two singularly associated beings—the one deriving his descent from the debased races of Africa, and the other from the fierce but lofty-minded aboriginal inhabitant of

this continent—dwelt nearly for the whole period of an ordinary human life. The cabin itself began to look really ancient, while those who dwelt in it had little altered within the memory of man! Such instances of longevity, whatever theorists may say on the subject, are not unfrequent among either the blacks or the "natives," though probably less so among the last than among the first, and still less so among the first of the northern than of the southern sections of the republic. It is common to say that the great age so often attributed to the people of these two races is owing to ignorance of the periods of their births, and that they do not live longer than the whites. This may be true, in the main, for a white man is known to have died at no great distance from Ravensnest, within the last five-and-twenty years, who numbered more than his six score of years; but aged negroes and aged Indians are nevertheless so common, when the smallness of their whole numbers is remembered, as to render the fact apparent to most of those who have seen much of their respective people.

There was no highway in the vicinity of the wigwam, for so the cabin was generally called, though wigwam in the strict meaning of

the word, it was not. As the little building stood in the grounds of the Nest House, which contain two hundred acres, a bit of virgin forest included, and exclusively of the fields that belonged to the adjacent farm, it was approached only by footpaths, of which several led to and from it, and by one narrow, winding carriage-road, which, in passing for miles through the grounds, had been led near the hut, in order to enable my grandmother and sister, and I dare say my dear departed mother, while she lived, to make their calls in their frequent airings. By this sweeping road we approached the cabin.

"There are the two old fellows, sunning themselves this fine day!" exclaimed my uncle, with something like tremor in his voice, as we drew near enough to the hut to distinguish objects. "Hugh, I never see these men without a feeling of awe, as well as of affection. They were the friends, and one was the slave of my grandfather; and as long as I can remember, have they been aged men! They seem to be set up here as monuments of the past, to connect the generations that are gone with those that are to come."

"If so, sir, they will soon be all there is of

their sort. It really seems to me that, if things continue much longer in their present direction, men will begin to grow jealous and envious of history itself, because its actors have left descendants to participate in any little credit they may have gained."

"Beyond all contradiction, boy, there is a strange perversion of the old and natural sentiments on this head among us. But you must bear in mind the fact, that of the two millions and a half the State contains, not half a million, probably, possess any of the true York blood, and can consequently feel any of the sentiments connected with the birth-place and the older traditions of the very society in which they live. A great deal must be attributed to the facts of our condition; though I admit those facts need not, and ought not, to unsettle principles. But look at those two old fellows! There they are, true to the feelings and habits of their races, even after passing so long a time together in this hut. There squats Susquesus on a stone, idle and disdaining work, with his rifle leaning against the apple-tree; while Jaaf—or Yop, as I believe it is better to call him—is pecking about in the garden, still a slave at his work, in fancy at least."

"And which is the happiest, sir—the industrious old man or the idler?"

"Probably each finds most happiness in indulging his own early habits. The Onondago never *would* work, however, and I have heard my father say, great was his happiness when he found he was to pass the remainder of his days in *otium cum dignitate*, and without the necessity of making baskets."

"Yop is looking at us; had we not better go up at once and speak to them?"

"Yop may stare the most openly, but my life on it the Indian *sees* twice as much. His faculties are the best, to begin with; and he is a man of extraordinary and characteristic observation. In his best days nothing ever escaped him. As you say, we will approach."

My uncle and myself then consulted on the expediency of using broken English with these two old men, of which, at first, we saw no necessity; but when we remembered that others might join us, and that our communications with the two might be frequent for the next few days, we changed our minds, and determined rigidly to observe our incognitos.

As we came up to the door of the hut, Jaaf slowly left his little garden and joined the Indian, who remained immoveable and unmoved

on the stone which served him for a seat. We could see but little change in either during the five years of our absence, each being a perfect picture, in his way, of extreme but not decrepit old age in the men of his race. Of the two, the black—if black he could now be called, his colour being a muddy grey—was the most altered, though that seemed scarcely possible when I saw him last. As for the Trackless, or Susquesus, as he was commonly called, his temperance throughout a long life did him good service, and his half-naked limbs and skeleton-like body, for he wore the summer dress of his people, appeared to be made of a leather long steeped in a tannin of the purest quality. His sinews, too, though much stiffened, seemed yet to be of whip-cord, and his whole frame a species of indurated mummy, that retained its vitality. The colour of the skin was less red than formerly, and more closely approached to that of the negro, as the latter now was, though perceptibly different.

"Sago—sago," cried my uncle, as we came quite near, seeing no risk in using that familiar semi-Indian salutation.* "Sago, sago dis char-

* The editor has often had occasion to explain the meaning of terms of this nature. The colonists caught a great many words from the Indians they first knew, and used them

min' mornin; in my tongue, dat might be *guten tag.*"

"Sago," returned the Trackless, in his deep guttural voice, while old Yop brought two lips together that resembled thick pieces of over-done beef-steak, fastened his red-encircled gummy eyes on each of us in turn, pouted once more, working his jaws as if proud of the excellent teeth they still held, and said nothing. As the slave of a Littlepage, he held pedlars as inferior beings; for the ancient negroes of New York ever identified themselves, more or less, with the families to which they belonged, and in which they so often were born. "Sago," repeated the Indian, slowly, courteously, and with emphasis, after he had looked a moment

to all other Indians, though not belonging to their languages; and these other tribes using them as English, a sort of limited *lingua franca* has grown up in the country that everybody understands. It is believed that "moccasin," "squaw," "pappoose," "sago," "tomahawk," "wigwam," &c. &c., all belong to this class of words. There can be little doubt that the *sobriquet* of "Yankees" is derived from "Yengeese," the manner in which the tribes nearest to New England pronounced the word "English." It is to this hour a provincialism of that part of the country to pronounce this word "*Eng*-lish" instead of "*Ing*-lish," its conventional sound. The change from "*Eng*-lish" to "*Yen*-geese" is very trifling. —EDITOR.

longer at my uncle, as if he saw something about him to command respect.

"Dis ist charmin' day, frients," said uncle Ro, placing himself coolly on a log of wood that had been hauled for the stove, and wiping his brow. "Vat might you calls dis coontry?"

"Dis here?" answered Yop, not without a little contempt. "Dis is York Colony; where you come from to ask sich a question?"

"Charmany. Dat ist far off, but a goot coontry; ant dis ist goot coontry too."

"Why you leab him, den, if he be good country, eh?"

"Vhy you leaf Africa, canst you dell me dat?" retorted uncle Ro, somewhat coolly.

"Nebber was dere," growled old Yop, bringing his blubber lips together somewhat in the manner the boar works his jaws when it is prudent to get out of his way. "I'm York-nigger born, and nebber seen no Africa; and nebber want to see him, nudder."

It is scarcely necessary to say that Jaaf belonged to a school by which the term of "coloured gentleman" was never used. The men of his time and stamp called themselves "niggers;" and ladies and gentlemen of that age took them at their word, and called them

"niggers" too; a term that no one of the race ever uses now, except in the way of reproach, and which, by one of the singular workings of our very wayward and common nature, he is more apt to use than any other, when reproach is intended.

My uncle paused a moment to reflect before he continued a discourse that had not appeared to commence under very flattering auspices.

"Who might lif in dat big stone house?" asked uncle Ro, as soon as he thought the negro had had time to cool a little.

"Anybody can see you no Yorker, by dat werry speech," answered Yop, not at all mollified by such a question. "Who *should* lib dere but Gin'ral Littlepage?"

"Vell, I dought he was dead, long ago."

"What if he be? It's his house, and he lib in it; and ole *young* missus lib dere too."

Now, there had been three generations of generals among the Littlepages, counting from father to son. First, there had been Brigadier General Evans Littlepage, who held that rank in the militia, and died in service during the revolution. The next was Brigadier General Cornelius Littlepage, who got his rank by brevet, at the close of the same war, in which.

he had actually figured as a colonel of the New York line. Third, and last, was my own grandfather, Major General Mordaunt Littlepage: he had been a captain in his father's regiment at the close of the same struggle, got the brevet of major at its termination, and rose to be a Major General of the militia, the station he held for many years before he died. As soon as the privates had the power to elect their own officers, the position of a Major General in the militia ceased to be respectable, and few gentlemen could be induced to serve. As might have been foreseen, the militia itself fell into general contempt, where it now is, and where it will ever remain until a different class of officers shall be chosen. The people can do a great deal, no doubt, but they cannot make a "silk purse out of a sow's ear." As soon as officers from the old classes shall be appointed, the militia will come up; for in no interest in life is it so material to have men of certain habits, and notions, and education, in authority, as in those connected with the military service. A great many fine speeches may be made, and much patriotic eulogy expended on the intrinsic virtue and intelligence of the people, and divers projects entertained to make "citizen-soldiers,"

as they are called; but citizens never can be, and never will be turned into soldiers at all, good or bad, until proper officers are placed over them. To return to Yop—

"Bray vhat might be der age of das laty dat you callet *olt* young missus?" asked my uncle.

"Gosh! she nutten but gal—born sometime just a'ter ole French war. Remember her well 'nough when she Miss Dus Malbone. Young masser Mordaunt take fancy to her, and make her he wife."

"Vell, I hopes you hafn't any objection to der match?"

"Not I; she clebber young lady den, and she werry clebber young lady now."

And this of my venerable grandmother, who had fairly seen her four-score years!

"Who might be der master of das big house now?"

"Gin'ral Littlepage, does n't I tell ye! Masser Mordaunt's name, *my* young master. Sus, dere, only Injin; he nebber so lucky as hab a good master. Niggers gettin' scarce, dey tells me, now-a-days, in dis world!"

"Injins, too, I dinks; dere ist no more redskins might be blenty."

The manner in which the Onondago raised

his figure, and the look he fastened on my uncle, were both fine and startling. As yet he had said nothing beyond the salutation; but I could see he now intended to speak.

"New tribe," he said, after regarding us for half a minute intently; "what you call him—where he come from?"

"Ja, ja—das ist der anti-rent redskins. Haf you seen 'em, Trackless?"

"Sartain; come to see me—face in bag—behave like squaw; poor Injin—poor warrior!"

"Yees, I believes dat ist true enough. I can't bear soch Injin!—might not be soch Injin in world. What you call 'em, eh?"

Susquesus shook his head slowly, and with dignity. Then he gazed intently at my uncle; after which he fastened his eyes in a similar manner on me. In this manner his looks turned from one to the other for some little time, when he again dropped them to the earth, calmly and in silence. I took out the hurdy-gurdy, and began to play a lively air—one that was very popular among the American blacks, and which, I am sorry to say, is getting to be not less so among the whites. No visible effect was produced on Susquesus, unless a slight shade of contempt was visible on his dark fea-

tures. With Jaaf, however, it was very different. Old as he was, I could see a certain nervous twitching of the lower limbs, which indicated that the old fellow actually felt some disposition to dance. It soon passed away, though his grim, hard, wrinkled, dusky, grey countenance continued to gleam with a sort of dull pleasure for some time. There was nothing surprising in this, the indifference of the Indian to melody being almost as marked as the negro's sensitiveness to its power.

It was not to be expected that men so aged would be disposed to talk much. The Onondago had ever been a silent man; dignity and gravity of character uniting with prudence to render him so. But Jaaf was constitutionally garrulous, though length of days had necessarily much diminished the propensity. At that moment a fit of thoughful and melancholy silence came over my uncle, too, and all four of us continued brooding on our own reflections for two or three minutes after I had ceased to play. Presently the even, smooth approach of carriage-wheels was heard, and a light, summer vehicle that was an old acquaintance, came whirling round the stable, and drew up within ten feet of the spot where we were all seated.

My heart was in my mouth, at this unex-

pected interruption, and I could perceive that my uncle was scarcely less affected. Amid the flowing and pretty drapery of summer shawls, and the other ornaments of the female toilet, were four youthful and sunny faces, and one venerable with years. In a word, my grandmother, my sister, and my uncle's two other wards, and Mary Warren, were in the carriage; yes, the pretty, gentle, timid, yet spirited and intelligent daughter of the rector was of the party, and seemingly quite at home and at her ease, as one among friends. She was the first to speak even, though it was in a low, quiet voice, addressed to my sister, and in words that appeared extorted by surprise.

"There are the very two pedlars of whom I told you, Martha," she said; "and now you may hear the flute well played."

"I doubt if he can play better than Hugh," was my dear sister's answer. "But we'll have some of his music, if it be only to remind us of him who is so far away."

"The music we can and will have, my child," cried my grandmother, cheerfully; "though *that* is not wanted to remind us of our absent boy. Good morrow, Susquesus; I hope this fine day agrees with you."

"Sago," returned the Indian, making a dig-

nified and even graceful forward gesture with one arm, though he did not rise. "Weadder good—Great Spirit good, dat reason. How squaws do?"

"We are all well, I thank you, Trackless. Good morrow, Jaaf; how do *you* do, this fine morning?"

Yop, or Jaap, or Jaaf, rose tottering, made a low obeisance, and then answered in the semi-respectful, semi-familiar manner of an old, confidential family servant, as the last existed among our fathers:

"T'ank 'ee, Miss Dus, wid all my heart," he answered. "Pretty well to-day; but ole Sus, he fail, and grow ol'er and ol'er desp'ate fast!"

Now, of the two, the Indian was much the finest relic of human powers, though he was less uneasy and more stationary than the black. But the propensity to see the mote in the eye of his friend, while he forgot the beam in his own, was a long-established and well-known weakness of Jaaf, and its present exhibition caused everybody to smile. I was delighted with the beaming, laughing eyes of Mary Warren in particular, though she said nothing.

"I cannot say I agree with you, Jaaf," returned my smiling grandmother. "The

Trackless, bears his years surprisingly; and I think I have not seen him look better this many a day than he is looking this morning. We are none of us as young as we were when we first became acquainted, Jaaf—which is now near, i not quite, three-score years ago."

"You nuttin' but gal, nudder," growled the negro. "Ole Sus be raal ole fellow; but Miss Dus and Masser Mordaunt, dey get married only tudder day. Why *dat* was a'ter de revy-looshen!"

"It was, indeed," replied the venerable woman, with a touch of melancholy in her tones; "but the revolution took place many, many a long year since!"

"Well, now, I be surprise, Miss Dus! How you call *dat* so long, when he only be tudder day?" retorted the pertinacious negro, who began to grow crusty, and to speak in a short, spiteful way, as if displeased by hearing that to which he could not assent. "Masser Corny was little ole, p'r'aps, if he lib, but all de rest ob you nuttin' but children. Tell me one t'ing, Miss Dus, be it true dey's got a town at Satanstoe!"

"An attempt was made, a few years since, to turn the whole country into towns, and, among

other places, the Neck; but I believe it will never be anything more than a capital farm."

"So besser. *Dat* good land, I tell you! One acre down dere wort' more dan twenty acre up here."

"My grandson would not be pleased to hear you say that, Jaaf."

"Who your grandson, Miss Dus. Remember you hab little baby tudder day; but baby can't hab baby."

"Ah, Jaaf, my old friend, my babies have long since been men and women, and are drawing on to old age. One, and he was my first born, is gone before us to a better world, and *his* boy is now your young master. This young lady, that is seated opposite to me, is the sister of that young master, and she would be grieved to think you have forgotten her."

Jaaf laboured under the difficulty so common to old age; he was forgetful of things of more recent date, while he remembered those which had occurred a century ago! The memory is a tablet that partakes of the peculiarity of all our opinions and habits. In youth it is easily impressed, and the images then engraved on it are distinct, deep and lasting, while those that succeed become crowded, and take less root, from

the circumstance of finding the ground already occupied. In the present instance, the age was so great that the change was really startling, the old negro's recollections occasionally coming on the mind like a voice from the grave. As for the Indian, as I afterwards ascertained, he was better preserved in all respects than the black; his great temperance in youth, freedom from labour, exercise in the open air, united to the comforts and abundance of semi-civilized habits, that had now lasted for near a century, contributing to preserve both mind and body. As I now looked at him, I remembered what I had heard in boyhood of his history.

There had ever been a mystery about the life of the Onondago. If any one of our set had ever been acquainted with the facts, it was Andries Coejemans, a half-uncle of my dear grandmother, a person who has been known among us by the *sobriquet* of the Chainbearer. My grandmother had told me that "uncle Chainbearer," as we all called the old relative, *did* know all about Susquesus, in his time—the reason why he had left his tribe, and become a hunter, and warrior, and runner among the pale-faces—and that he had always said the particulars did his red friend great credit, but

that he would reveal it no further. So great, however, was uncle Chainbearer's reputation for integrity, that such an opinion was sufficient to procure for the Onondago the fullest confidence of the whole connexion, and the experience of four-score years and ten had proved that this confidence was well placed. Some imputed the sort of exile in which the old man had so long lived to love; others to war; and others, again, to the consequences of those fierce personal feuds that are known to occur among men in the savage state. But all was just as much a mystery and matter of conjecture, now we were drawing near to the middle of the nineteenth century, as it had been when our forefathers were receding from the middle of the eighteenth! To return to the negro.

Although Jaaf had momentarily forgotten me, and quite forgotten my parents, he remembered my sister, who was in the habit of seeing him so often. In what manner he connected her with the family, it is not easy to say: but he knew her not only by sight, but by name, and, as one might say, by blood.

"Yes, yes," cried the old fellow, a little eagerly, '*champing*' his thick lips together, somewhat as an alligator snaps his jaws, "yes,

I knows Miss Patty, of course. Miss Patty is werry han'some, and grows han'somer and han'somer ebbery time I sees her—yah, yah, yah!" The laugh of that old negro sounded startling and unnatural, yet there was something of the joyous in it, after all, like every negro's laugh. "Yah, yah, yah! Yes, Miss Patty won'erful han'some, and werry like Miss Dus. I s'pose, now, Miss Patty wast born about 'e time dat Gin'ral Washington die."

As this was a good deal more than doubling my sister's age, it produced a common laugh among the light-hearted girls in the carriage. A gleam of intelligence that almost amounted to a smile also shot athwart the countenance of the Onondago, while the muscles of his face worked, but he said nothing. I had reason to know afterwards that the tablet of his memory retained its records better.

"What friends have you with you to-day, Jaaf," inquired my grandmother, inclining her head towards us pedlars graciously, at the same time; a salutation that my uncle Ro and myself rose hastily to acknowledge.

As for myself, I own honestly that I could have jumped into the vehicle and kissed my dear grandmother's still good-looking but colourless

cheeks, and hugged Patt, and possibly some of the others, to my heart. Uncle Ro had more command of himself; though I could see that the sound of his venerable parent's voice, in which the tremour was barely perceptible, was near overcoming him.

"Dese be pedlar, ma'am, I do s'pose," answered the black. "Dey's got box wid somet'in' in him, and dey's got new kind of fiddle. Come, young man, gib Miss Dus a tune—a libely one; sich as make an ole nigger dance."

I drew round the hurdy-gurdy, and was beginning to flourish away, when a gentle, sweet voice, raised a little louder than usual by eagerness, interrupted me.

"Oh! not that thing, not that; the flute, the flute!" exclaimed Mary Warren, blushing to the eyes at her own boldness, the instant she saw that she was heard, and that I was about to comply.

It is hardly necessary to say that I bowed respectfully, laid down the hurdy-gurdy, drew the flute from my pocket, and, after a few flourishes, commenced playing one of the newest airs, or melodies, from a favourite opera. I saw the colour rush into Martha's cheeks the

moment I had got through a bar or two, and the start she gave satisfied me that the dear girl remembered her brother's flute. I had played on that very instrument ever since I was sixteen, but I had made an immense progress in the art during the five years just passed in Europe. Masters at Naples, Paris, Vienna, and London had done a great deal for me; and I trust I shall not be thought vain if I add, that nature had done something, too. My excellent grandmother listened in profound attention, and all four of the girls were enchanted.

"That music is worthy of being heard in a room," observed the former, as soon as I concluded the air; "and we shall hope to hear it this evening, at the Nest House, if you remain anywhere near us. In the mean time, we must pursue our airing."

As my grandmother spoke she leaned forward and extended her hand to me, with a benevolent smile. I advanced, received the dollar that was offered, and, unable to command my feelings, raised the hand to my lips, respectfully, but with fervour. Had Martha's face been near me, it would have suffered also. I suppose there was nothing in this respectful salutation that struck the spectators as very much out of

the way, foreigners having foreign customs, but I saw a flush in my venerable grandmother's cheek, as the carriage moved off. *She* had noted the warmth of the manner. My uncle had turned away, I dare say to conceal the tears that started to his eyes, and Jaaf followed towards the door of the hut, whither my uncle moved, in order to do the honours of the place. This left me quite alone with the Indian.

"Why no kiss *face* of grandmodder?" asked the Onondago, coolly and quietly.

Had a clap of thunder broken over my head, I could not have been more astonished! The disguise that had deceived my nearest relations —that had baffled Seneca Newcome, and had set at naught even his sister Opportunity—had failed to conceal me from that Indian, whose faculties might be supposed to have been numbed with age!

"Is it possible that you know me, Susquesus!" I exclaimed, signing towards the negro at the same time by way of caution; "that you remember me, at all! I should have thought this wig, these clothes would have concealed me."

"Sartain," answered the aged Indian, calmly. "Know young chief soon as see him; know

fader—know mudder; know gran'fader, gran'-mudder—great-gran'fader; *his* fader too; know all. Why forget young chief?"

"Did you know me before I kissed my grandmother's hand, or only by that act?"

"Know as soon as see him. What eyes good for, if don't know? Know uncle, dere, sartain; welcome home!"

"But you will not let others know us, too, Trackless? We have always been friends, I hope?"

"Be sure, friends. Why ole eagle, wid white head, strike young pigeon? Nebber hatchet in 'e path between Susquesus and any of de tribe of Ravensnest. Too ole to dig him up now."

"There are good reasons why my uncle and myself should not be known for a few days. Perhaps you have heard something of the trouble that has grown up between the landlords and the tenants, in the land?"

"What dat trouble?"

"The tenants are tired of paying rent, and wish to make a new bargain, by which they can become owners of the farms on which they live."

A grim light played upon the swarthy counte-

nance of the Indian: his lips moved, but he uttered nothing aloud.

"Have you heard anything of this, Susquesus?"

"Little bird sing sich song in my ear—didn't like to hear it."

"And of Indians who are moving up and down the country, armed with rifles and dressed in calico?"

"What tribe, dem Injin?" asked the Trackless, with a quickness and a fire I did not think it possible for him to retain. "What 'ey do, marchin' 'bout?—on war-path, eh?"

"In one sense they may be said to be so. They belong to the anti-rent tribe; do you know such a nation?"

"Poor Ingin dat, b'lieve. Why come so late?—why no come when 'e foot of Susquesus light as feather of bird?—why stay away till pale-faces plentier dan leaf on tree, or snow in air? Hundred year ago, when dat oak little, sich Ingin might be good; now, he good for nuttin'."

"But you will keep our secret, Sus?—will not even tell the negro who we are?"

The Trackless simply nodded his head in assent. After this he seemed to me to sink

back in a sort of brooding lethargy, as if indisposed to pursue the subject. I left him to go to my uncle, in order to relate what had just passed. Mr. Roger Littlepage was as much astonished as I had been myself, at hearing that one so aged should have detected us through disguises that had deceived our nearest of kin. But the quiet penetration and close observation of the man had long been remarkable. As his good faith was of proof, however, neither felt any serious apprehension of being betrayed, as soon as he had a moment for reflection.

CHAPTER IX.

"He saw a cottage with a double coach-house,
A cottage of gentility;
And the devil did grin, for his darling sin
Is the pride that apes humility."

DEVIL'S THOUGHTS.

IT was now necessary to determine what course we ought next to pursue. It might appear presuming in men of our pursuits to go to the Nest before the appointed time; and did we proceed on to the village, we should have the distance between the two places to walk over twice, carrying our instruments and jewel-box. After a short consultation, it was decided to visit the nearest dwellings, and to remain as near my own house as was practicable, making an arrangement to sleep somewhere in its immediate vicinity. Could we trust any one with our secret, our fare would probably be all the

better; but my uncle thought it most prudent to maintain a strict incognito until he had ascertained the true state of things in the town.

We took leave of the Indian and the negro, therefore, promising to visit them again in the course of that or the succeeding day, and followed the path that led to the farm-house. It was our opinion that we might, at least, expect to meet with friends in the occupants of the home farm. The same family had been retained in possession there for three generations, and being hired to manage the husbandry and to take care of the dairy, there was not the same reason for the disaffection, that was said so generally to exist among the tenantry, prevailing among them. The name of this family was Miller, and it consisted of the two heads and some six or seven children, most of the latter being still quite young.

"Tom Miller was a trusty lad, when I knew much of him," said my uncle, as we drew near to the barn, in which we saw the party mentioned, at work; "and he is said to have behaved well in one or two alarms they have had at the Nest, this summer; still, it may be wiser not to let even him into our secret as yet."

"I am quite of your mind, sir," I answered;

" for who knows that he has not just as strong a desire as any of them to own the farm on which he lives? He is the grandson of the man who cleared it from the forest, and has much the same title as the rest of them."

" Very true; and why should not that give him just as good a right to claim an interest in the farm, beyond that he has got under his contract to work it, as if he held a lease? He who holds a lease gets no right beyond his bargain; nor does this man. The one is paid for his labour by the excess of his receipts over the amount of his annual rent, while the other is paid partly in what he raises, and partly in wages. In principle there is no difference whatever, not a particle; yet I question if the veriest demagogue in the State would venture to say that the man, or the family, which works a farm for hire, even for a hundred years, gets the smallest right to say he shall not quit it, if its owner please, as soon as his term of service is up!"

" ' The love of money is the root of all evil;' and when that feeling is uppermost, one can never tell what a man will do. The bribe of a good farm, obtained for nothing, or for an insignificant price, is sufficient to upset the morality of even Tom Miller."

"You are right, Hugh; and here is one of the points in which our political men betray the cloven foot. They write, and proclaim, and make speeches, as if the anti-rent troubles grew out of the durable lease system solely, whereas we all know that it is extended to all descriptions of obligations given for the occupancy of land —life-leases, leases for a term of years, articles for deeds, and bonds and mortgages. It is a wide-spread, though not yet universal attempt of those who have the least claim to the possession of real estate, to obtain the entire right, and that by agencies that neither the law nor good morals will justify. It is no new expedient for partizans to place *en evidence* no more of their principles and intentions than suits their purposes. But, here we are within ear-shot, and must resort to the High Dutch. *Guten tag, guten tag,*" continued uncle Ro, dropping easily into the broken English of our masquerade, as we walked into the barn, where Miller, two of his older boys, and a couple of hired men were at work, grinding scythes and preparing for the approaching hay-harvest. "It might be warm day, dis fine mornin'."

"Good day, good day," cried Miller, hastily, and glancing his eye a little curiously at our

equipments. "What have you got in your box—essences?"

"Nein; vatches and drinkets;" setting down the box, and opening it at once for the inspection of all present. "Von't you burchase a goot vatch, dis bleasant mornin'?"

"Be they ra-al gold?" asked Miller, a little doubtingly. "And all them chains and rings, be they gold too?"

"Not true golt; nein, nein; I might not say dat. But goot enough golt for blain folks, like you and me."

"Them things would never do for the grand quality over at the big house!" cried one of the labourers who was unknown to me, but whose name I soon ascertained was Joshua Brigham, and who spoke with a sort of malicious sneer that at once betrayed *he* was no friend. "You mean 'em for poor folks, I s'pose?"

"I means dem for any bodies dat will pay deir money for 'em," answered my uncle. "Would you like a vatch?"

"That would I; and a farm, too, if I could get 'em cheap," answered Brigham, with a sneer he did not attempt to conceal. "How do you sell farms to-day?"

"I haf got no farms; I sells drinkets and

vatches, but I doesn't sell farms. Vhat I haf got I vill sell, but I cannot sells vhat I haf not got."

"Oh! you'll get all you want if you'll stay long enough in this country! This is a free land, and just the place for a poor man; or it will be, as soon as we get all the lords and aristocrats out of it."

This was the first time I had ever heard this political blarney with my own ears, though I had understood it was often used by those who wish to give to their own particular envy and covetousness a grand and sounding air.

"Vell, I haf heards dat in America dere might not be any noples ant aristocrats," put in my uncle, with an appearance of beautiful simplicity; "and dat dere ist not ein graaf in der whole coontry."

"Oh! there's all sorts of folks here, just as they are to be found elsewhere," cried Miller, seating himself coolly on the end of the grindstone frame, to open and look into the mysteries of one of the watches. "Now, Josh Brigham, here, calls all that's above him in the world aristocrats, but he doesn't call all that's below him his equals."

I liked that speech; and I liked the cool,

decided way in which it was uttered. It denoted, in its spirit, a man who saw things as they are, and who was not afraid to say what he thought about them. My uncle Ro was surprised, and that agreeably, too, and he turned to Miller to pursue the discourse.

"Den dere might not be any nopility in America, after all?" he asked, inquiringly.

"Yes, there's plenty of such lords as Josh here, who want to be uppermost so plaguily that they don't stop to touch all the rounds of the ladder. I tell him, friend, he wants to get on too fast, and that he mustn't set up for a gentleman before he knows how to behave himself."

Josh looked a little abashed at a rebuke that came from one of his own class, and which he must have felt, in secret, was merited. But the demon was at work in him, and he had persuaded himself that he was the champion of a quality as sacred as liberty, when, in fact, he was simply and obviously doing neither more nor less than breaking the tenth commandment. He did not like to give up, while he skirmished with Miller, as the dog that has been beaten already two or three times growls over a bone at the approach of his conqueror.

"Well, thank heaven!" he cried, "*I* have got some spirit in my body."

"That's very true, Joshua," answered Miller, laying down one watch and taking up another; "but it happens to be an evil spirit."

"Now, here's them Littlepages; what makes them better than other folks?"

"You had better let the Littlepages alone, Joshua, seein' they're a family that you know nothing at all about."

"I don't want to know them; though I *do* happen to know all I want to know. I despise 'em."

"No, you don't, Joshy, my boy; nobody despises folks they talk so spitefully about. What's the price of this here watch, friend?"

"Four dollars," said my uncle, eagerly, falling lower than was prudent, in his desire to reward Miller for his good feeling and sound sentiments. "Ja, ja—you might haf das vatch for four dollars."

"I'm afraid it isn't good for anything," returned Miller, feeling the distrust that was natural at hearing a price so low. "Let's have another look at its inside."

No man, probably, ever bought a watch without looking into its works with an air of great

intelligence, though none but a mechanician is any wiser for his survey. Tom Miller acted on this principle, for the good looks of the machine he held in his hand, and the four dollars, tempted him sorely. It had its effect, too, on the turbulent and envious Joshua, who seemed to understand himself very well in a bargain. Neither of the men had supposed the watches to be of gold, for though the metal that is in a watch does not amount to a great deal, it is usually of more value than all that was asked for the "article" now under examination. In point of fact, my uncle had this very watch "invoiced to him" at twice the price he now put it at.

"And what do you ask for this?" demanded Joshua, taking up another watch of very similar looks and of equal value to the one that Miller still retained open in his hand. "Won't you let this go for three dollars?"

"No; der brice of dat is effery cent of forty dollars," answered uncle Ro, stubbornly.

The two men now looked at the pedlar in surprise. Miller took the watch from his hired man, examined it attentively, compared it with the other, and then demanded its price anew.

"*You* might haf eider of dem vatches for

four dollars," returned my uncle, as I thought, incautiously.

This occasioned a new surprise, though Brigham fortunately referred the difference to a mistake.

"Oh!" he said, "I understood you to say *forty* dollars. Four dollars is a different matter."

"Josh," interrupted the more observant and cooler-headed Miller, "it is high time, now, you and Peter go and look a'ter them sheep. The conch will soon be blowing for dinner. If you want a trade, you can have one when you get back."

Notwithstanding the plainness of his appearance and language, Tom Miller was captain of his own company. He gave this order quietly, and in his usual familiar way, but it was obviously to be obeyed without a remonstrance. In a minute the two hired men were off in company, leaving no one behind in the barn but Miller, his sons, and us two. I could see there was a motive for all this, but did not understand it.

"Now *he's* gone," continued Tom quietly, but laying an emphasis that sufficiently explained his meaning, "perhaps you'll let me know the

true price of this watch. I've a mind for it, and may be we can agree."

"Four dollars," answered my uncle, distinctly. "I haf said you might haf it for dat money, and vhat I haf said once might always be."

"I will take it then. I almost wish you had asked eight, though four dollars saved is suthin' for a poor man. It's so plaguy cheap I'm a little afraid on't; but I'll ventur'. There; there's your money, and in hard cash."

"Dank you, sir. Won't das ladies choose to look at my drinkets?"

"Oh! if you want to deal with ladies who buy chains and rings the Nest House is the place. My woman wouldn't know what to do with sich things, and don't set herself up for a fine lady at all. That chap who has just gone for the sheep is the only great man we have about this farm."

"Ja, ja; he ist a nople in a dirty shirt: ja, ja; why hast he dem pig feelin's?"

"I believe you have named them just as they ought to be, *pig's* feelin's. It's because he wishes to thrust his own snout all over the trough, and is mad when he finds anybody else's in the way. We're getting to have plenty of such fellows up

and down the country, and an uncomfortable time they give us. Boys, I *do* believe it will turn out, a'ter all, that Josh is an Injin!"

"I *know* he is," answered the oldest of the two sons, a lad of nineteen; "where else should he be so much of nights and Sundays, but at their trainin's?—and what was the meanin' of the calico bundle I saw under his arm a month ago, as I told you on at the time?"

"If I find it out to be as you say, Harry, he shall tramp off of this farm. I'll have no Injins here!"

"Vell I dought I dit see an olt Injin in a hut up yonder ast by der woots!" put in my uncle, innocently.

"Oh! that is Susquesus, an Onondago; he is a true Injin and a gentleman; but we have a parcel of the mock gentry about, who are a pest and an eyesore to every honest man in the country. Half on 'em are nothing but thieves in mock Injin dresses. The law is ag'in 'em, right is ag'in 'em, and every true friend of liberty in the country ought to be ag'in 'em."

"Vhat ist der matter in dis coontry? I hear in Europe how America ist a free lant, ant how efery man hast his rights; but since I got here dey do nothin' but talk of barons, and noples,

and tenants, and arisdograts, and all der bat dings I might leaf behint me, in der olt worlt."

"The plain matter is, friend, that they who have got little, envy them that's got much; and the struggle is to see which is the strongest. On the one side is the law, and right, and bargains, and contracts; and on the other thousands—not of dollars, but of men. Thousands of voters; d'ye understand?"

"Ja, ja—I oonderstands; dat ist easy enough. But vhy do dey dalk so much of noples and arisdograts?—ist der noples and arisdograts in America?"

"Well, I don't much understand the natur' of sich things; there sartainly is a difference in men, and a difference in their fortun's, and edications, and such sort of things."

"Und der law, den, favours der rich man at der cost of der poor, in America, too, does it? Und you haf arisdograts who might not pay taxes, and who holt all der offices, and get all der pooblic money, and who ist petter pefore de law, in all dings, dan ast dem dat be not arisdograts? Is it so?"

Miller laughed outright, and shook his head at this question, continuing to examine the trinkets the whole time.

"No, no, my friend, we've not much of *that*, in this part of the world, either. Rich men get very few offices, to begin with; for it's an argooment in favour of a man for an office, that he's poor, and *wants* it. Folks don't so much ask who the office wants, as who wants the office. Then, as for taxes, there isn't much respect paid to the rich, on that score. Young 'Squire Littlepage pays the tax on this farm directly himself, and it's assessed half as high ag'in, all things considered, as any other farm on his estate."

"But dat ist not right."

"Right! Who says it is?—or who thinks there is anything right about assessments, anywhere? I have heard assessors, with my own ears, use such words as these:—'Sich a man is rich, and can afford to pay,' and 'sich a man is poor, and it will come hard on him.' Oh! they kiver up dishonesty, now-a-days, under all sorts of argooments."

"But der law; der rich might haf der law on deir side, surely?"

"In what way, I should like to know? Juries be everything, and juries will go accordin' to their feelin's, as well as other men. I've seen the things with my own eyes. The county pays just enough a-day to make poor men like to be

on juries, and they never fail to attend, while them that can pay their fines stay away, and so leave the law pretty much in the hands of one party. No rich man gains his cause, unless his case is so strong it can't be helped."

I had heard this before, there being a very general complaint throughout the country of the practical abuses connected with the jury system. I have heard intelligent lawyers complain, that whenever a cause of any interest is to be tried, the first question asked is not "what are the merits?" "which has the law and the facts on his side?" but "who is likely to be on the jury?"—thus obviously placing the composition of the jury before either law or evidence. Systems may have a very fair appearance on paper and as theories, that are execrable in practice. As for juries, I believe the better opinion of the intelligent of all countries is, that while they are a capital contrivance to resist the abuse of power in narrow governments, in governments of a broad constituency they have the effect, which might easily be seen, of placing the control of the law in the hands of those who would be most apt to abuse it; since it is adding to, instead of withstanding and resisting the controlling authority of the State, from which,

in a popular government, most of the abuses must unavoidably proceed.

As for my uncle Ro, he was disposed to pursue the subject with Miller, who turned out to be a discreet and conscientious man. After a very short pause, as if to reflect on what had been said, he resumed the discourse.

"What, den, makes arisdograts in dis coontry?" asked my uncle.

"Wa-a-l"—no man but an American of New England descent, as was the case with Miller, can give this word its attic sound—"Wa-a-l, it's hard to say. I hear a great deal about aristocrats, and I read a great deal about aristocrats, in this country, and I know that most folks look upon them as hateful, but I'm by no means sartain I know what an aristocrat is. Do you happen to know anything about it, friend?"

"Ja, ja; an arisdograt ist one of a few men dat hast all de power of de government in deir own hands."

"King! That isn't what we think an aristocrat in this part of the world. Why, we call them critturs here DIMIGOGUES! Now, young 'Squire Littlepage, who owns the Nest House, over yonder, and who is owner of all this estate far and near, is what *we* call an aristocrat, and

he hasn't power enough to be named town clerk, much less to anything considerable, or what is worth having."

"How can he be an arisdograt, den?"

"How, sure enough, if your account be true! I tell you 'tis the dimigogues that be the aristocrats of America. Why, Josh Brigham, who has just gone for the sheep, can get more votes for any office in the country than young Littlepage!"

"Berhaps dis young Littlebage ist a pat yoong man?"

"Not he; he's as good as any on 'em, and better than most. Besides, if he was as wicked as Lucifer, the folks of the country don't know anything about it, sin' he's be'n away ever sin' he has be'n a man."

"Vhy, den, gan't he haf as many votes as dat poor, ignorant fellow might haf?—das ist ott."

"It is odd, but it's true as gospel. *Why*, it may not be so easy to tell. Many men, many minds, you know. Some folks don't like him because he lives in a big house; some hate him because they think he is better off than they are themselves; others mistrust him because he wears a fine coat; and some pretend to laugh

at him because he got his property from his father, and grand'ther, and so on, and didn't make it himself. Accordin' to some folks' notions, now-a-days, a man ought to enj'y only the property he heaps together himself."

"If dis be so, your Herr Littlebage ist no arisdograt."

"Wa-a-l, that isn't the idee, hereaway. We have had a great many meetin's, latterly, about the right of the people to their farms; and there has been a good deal of talk at them meetin's, consarnin' aristocracy and feudal tenors; do you know what a feudal tenor is, too?"

"Ja; dere ist moch of dat in Teutchland—in mine coontry. It is not ferry easy to explain it in a few vords, but der brincipal ding is dat der vassal owes a serfice to hist lort. In de olten dimes dis serfice vast military, und dere ist someding of dat now. It ist de noples who owe der feudal serfice, brincipally, in mine coontry, and dey owes it to de kings und brinces."

"And don't you call giving a chicken for rent feudal service, in Germany?"

Uncle Ro and I laughed, in spite of our efforts to the contrary, there being a bathos in

this question that was supremely ridiculous. Curbing his merriment, however, as soon as he could, my uncle answered the question.

"If der landlordt hast a right to coome and dake as many chickens as he bleases, und ast often ast he bleases, den dat wouldt look like a feudal right; but if de lease says dat so many chickens moost be paid a-year, for der rent, vhy dat ist all der same as baying so much moneys; und it might be easier for der tenant to bay in chicken ast it might be to bay in der silver. Vhen a man canst bay his debts in vhat he makes himself, he ist ferry interpentent."

"It does seem so, I vow! Yet there's folks about here, and some at Albany, that call it feudal for a man to have to carry a pair of fowls to the landlord's office, and the landlord an aristocrat for asking it!"

"But der man canst sent a poy, or a gal, or a nigger, wid his fowls, if he bleases?"

"Sartain; all that is asked is that the fowls should come."

"Und vhen der batroon might owe hist tailor, or hist shoemaker, must he not go to hist shop, or find him and bay him vhat he owes, or be suet for der debt?"

"That's true, too; boys, put me in mind of

telling that to Josh, this evening. Yes, the greatest landlord in the land must hunt up his creditor, or be sued, all the same as the lowest tenant."

"Und he most bay in a partic'lar ding; he most bay in golt or silver?"

"True; lawful tender is as good for one as 'tis for t'other."

"Und if your Herr Littlebage signs a baper agreein' to gif der apples from dat orchart to somebody on his landts, most he send or carry der apples, too?"

"To be sure; that would be the bargain."

"Und he most carry der ferry apples dat grows on dem ferry drees, might it not be so?"

"All true as gospel. If a man contracts to sell the apples of one orchard, he can't put off the purchaser with the apples of another."

"Und der law ist der same for one ast for anudder, in dese t'ings?"

"There is no difference; and there should be none."

"Und der batroons und der landlordts wants to haf der law changet, so dat dey may be excuset from baying der debts accordin' to der bargains, unt to gif dem atfantages over der poor tenants?"

"I never heard anything of the sort, and don't believe they want any such change."

"Of vhat, den, dost der beople complain?"

"Of having to pay rent at all; they think the landlords ought to be made to sell their farms, or give them away. Some stand out for the last."

"But der landlordts don't vant to sell deir farms; und dey might not be made to sell vhat ist deir own, and vhat dey don't vant to sell, any more dan der tenants might be made to sell deir hogs and deir sheep, vhen dey don't vant to sell dem."

"It does seem so, boys, as I 've told the neighbours, all along. But I 'll tell this Dutchman all about it. Some folks want the State to look a'ter the title of young Littlepage, pretending he has no title."

"But der State wilt do dat widout asking for it particularly, vill it not?"

"I never heard that it would."

"If anybody hast a claim to der broperty, vilt not der courts try it?"

"Yes, yes—in that way; but a tenant can't set up a title ag'in his landlord."

"Vhy should he? He canst haf no title but his landlordt's, and it vould be roguery and

cheatery to let a man get into der bossession of a farm under der pretence of hiring it, und den coome out and claim it as owner. If any tenant dinks he hast a better right dan his landlordt, he can put der farm vhere it vast before he might be a tenant, und den der State wilt examine into der title, I fancys."

"Yes, yes—in that way; but these men want it another way. What they want is for the State to set up a legal examination, and turn the landlords off altogether if they can, and then let themselves have the farms in their stead."

"But dat would not be honest to dem dat hafe'nt nothing to do wid der farms. If der State owns der farms, it ought to get as moch as it can for dem, and so safe *all* der people from baying taxes. It looks like roguery, all roundt."

"I believe it is that, and nothing else! As you say, the State will examine into the title as it is, and there is no need of any laws about it."

"Would der State, dink you, pass a law dat might inquire into de demandts dat are made against der batroons, vhen der tratesmen sent in deir bills?"

"I should like to see any patroon ask sich a

thing! He would be laughed at from York to Buffalo."

"Und he would desarf it. By vhat I see, frient, your denants be der arisdograts, und der landlordts der vassals."

"Why you see—what may your name be?—as we 're likely to become acquainted, I should like to know your name."

"My name is Greisenbach, und I comes from Preussen."

"Well, Mr. Greisenbach, the difficulty about aristocracy is this. Hugh Littlepage is rich, and his money gives him advantages that other men can't enj'y. Now that sticks in some folks' crops."

"Oh! den it ist meant to divite broperty in dis coontry; und to say no man might haf more ast anudder?"

"Folks don't go quite as far as that, yet; though some of their talk does squint that-a-way, I must own. Now, there are folks about here that complain that old Madam Littlepage and her young ladies don't visit the poor."

"Vell, if deys be hard-hearted, und hast no feelin's for der poor and miseraple ——"

"No, no; that is not what I mean, neither. As for that sort of poor, everybody allows they

do more for *them* than anybody else about here. But they don't visit the poor that isn't in want."

"Vell, it ist a ferry coomfortable sort of poor dat ist not in any vant. Berhaps you mean dey don't associate wid 'em, as equals?"

"That's it. Now, on that head, I must say there is some truth in the charge, for the gals over at the Nest never come here to visit my gal, and Kitty is as nice a young thing as there is about."

"Und Gitty goes to visit the gal of the man who lives over yonter, in de house on der hill?" pointing to a residence of a man of the very humblest class in the town.

"Hardly! Kitty's by no means proud, but I shouldn't like her to be too thick there."

"Oh! you're an arisdograt, den, after all; else might your daughter visit dat man's daughter."

"I tell you, Grunzebach, or whatever your name may be," returned Miller, a little angrily, though a particularly good-natured man in the main, "that my gal shall *not* visit old Steven's da'ghters."

"Vell, I'm sure she might do as she bleases; but I dinks der Mademoiselles Littlepage might do ast dey pleases, too."

"There is but one Littlepage gal; if you saw them out this morning in the carriage, you saw two York gals and parson Warren's da'ghter with her."

"Und dis parson Warren might be rich, too?"

"Not he; he hasn't a sixpence on 'arth but what he gets from the parish. Why he is so poor his friends had to edicate his da'ghter, I have heern say, over and over!"

"Und das Littlepage gal und de Warren gal might be goot friends?"

"They are the thickest together of any two young women in this part of the world. I've never seen two gals more intimate. Now, there's a young lady in the town, one Opportunity Newcome, who, one might think, would stand before Mary Warren at the big house, any day in the week, but she doesn't! Mary takes all the shine out on her."

"Which ist der richest, Obbordunity or Mary?"

"By all accounts Mary Warren has nothing, while Opportunity is thought to come next to Matty herself, as to property, of all the young gals about here. But Opportunity is no favourite at the Nest."

"Den it would seem, after all, dat dis Miss Littlebage does not choose her friends on account of riches. She likes Mary Warren, who ist boor, und she does not like Obbordunity, who ist vell to do in the vorlt. Berhaps der Littlepages be not as big arisdograts as you supposes."

Miller was bothered, while I felt a disposition to laugh. One of the commonest errors of those who, from position and habits, are unable to appreciate the links which connect cultivated society together, is to refer everything to riches. Riches, in a certain sense, as a means and through their consequences, may be a principal agent in dividing society into classes; but, long after riches have taken wings, their fruits remain, when good use has been made of their presence. So untrue is the vulgar opinion—or it might be better to say the opinion of the vulgar—that money is the one tie which unites polished society, that it is a fact which all must know who have access to the better circles of even our own commercial towns, that those circles, loosely and accidently constructed as they are, receive with reluctance, nay, often sternly exclude, vulgar wealth from their associations, while the door is open to the cultivated

who have nothing. The young, in particular, seldom think much of money, while family connexions, early communications, similarity of opinions, and, most of all, of tastes, bring sets together, and often keep them together long after the golden band has been broken.

But men have great difficulty in comprehending things that lie beyond their reach; and money being apparent to the senses, while refinement, through its infinite gradations, is visible principally, and, in some cases, exclusively to its possessors, it is not surprising that common minds should refer a tie that, to them, would otherwise be mysterious, to the more glittering influence, and not to the less obvious. Infinite, indeed, are the gradations of cultivated habits; nor are as many of them the fruits of caprice and self-indulgence as men usually suppose. There is a common sense, nay, a certain degree of wisdom, in the laws of even etiquette, while they are confined to equals, that bespeak the respect of those who understand them. As for the influence of associations on men's manners, on their exteriors, and even on their opinions, my uncle Ro has long maintained that it is so apparent that one of his time of life could detect the man of the

world, at such a place as Saratoga even, by an intercourse of five minutes; and what is more, that he could tell the class in life from which he originally emerged. He tried it, the last summer, on our return from Ravensnest, and I was amused with his success, though he made a few mistakes, it must be admitted.

"That young man comes from the better circles, but he has never travelled," he said, alluding to one of a group which still remained at table; "while he who is next him *has* travelled, but commenced badly." This may seem a very nice distinction, but I think it is easily made. "There are two brothers, of an excellent family in Pennsylvania," he continued, "as one might know from the name; the eldest has travelled, the youngest has not." This was a still harder distinction to make, but one who knew the world as well as my uncle Ro could do it. He went on amusing me by his decisions —all of which were respectable, and some surprisingly accurate—in this way for several minutes. Now, like has an affinity to like, and in this natural attraction is to be found the secret of the ordinary construction of society. You shall put two men of superior minds in a room full of company, and they will find each

other out directly, and enjoy the accident. The same is true as to the mere modes of thinking that characterize social castes; and it is truer in this country, perhaps, than most others, from the mixed character of our associations. Of the two, I am really of opinion that the man of high intellect, who meets with one of moderate capacity, but of manners and social opinions on a level with his own, has more pleasure in the communication than with one of equal mind, but of inferior habits.

That Patt should cling to one like Mary Warren seemed to me quite as natural as that she should be averse to much association with Opportunity Newcome. The money of the latter, had my sister been in the least liable to such an influence, was so much below what she had been accustomed, all her life, to consider affluence, that it would have had no effect, even had she been subject to so low a consideration in regulating her intercourse with others. But this poor Tom Miller could not understand. He could "only reason from what he knew," and he knew little of the comparative notions of wealth, and less of the powers of cultivation on the mind and manners. He was struck, however, with a fact that did come completely

within the circle of his own knowledge, and that was the circumstance that Mary Warren, while admitted to be poor, was the bosom friend of her whom he was pleased to call, sometimes, the "Littlepage gal." It was easy to see he felt the force of this circumstance; and it is to be hoped that, as he was certainly a wiser, he also became a better man, on one of the most common of the weaknesses of human frailty.

"Wa-a-l," he replied to my uncle's last remark, after fully a minute of silent reflection, "I don't know! It would seem so, I vow; and yet it hasn't been my wife's notion, nor is it Kitty's. You're quite upsetting my idees about aristocrats; for though I like the Littlepages, I've always set 'em down as desp'rate aristocrats."

"Nein, nein; dem as vat you calls dimigogues be der American arisdograts. Dey gets all der money of der pooblic, and haf all der power, but dey gets a little mads because dey might not force demselves on der gentlemen and laties of der coontry, as vell as on der lands und der offices!"

"I swan! I don't know but this may be true! A'ter all, I don't know what right anybody has to complain of the Littlepages."

"Does dey dreat beoples vell, as might coome to see dem?"

"Yes, indeed! if folks treat *them* well, as sometimes doesn't happen. I've seen hogs here" —Tom was a little Saxon in his figures, but their nature will prove their justification—"I've seen hogs about here, bolt right in before old Madam Littlepage, and draw their chairs up to her fire, and squirt about the tobacco, and never think of even taking off their hats. Them folks be always huffy about their own importance, though they never think of other people's feelin's."

We were interrupted by the sound of wheels, and looking round, we perceived that the carriage of my grandmother had driven up to the farm-house door, on its return home. Miller conceived it to be no more than proper to go and see if he were wanted, and we followed him slowly, it being the intention of my uncle to offer his mother a watch, by way of ascertaining if she could penetrate his disguise.

CHAPTER X.

"Will you buy any tape,
Or lace for your cape?—
Come to the pedlar,
Money's a medler,
That doth utter all men's ware-a."

WINTER'S TALE.

THERE they sat, those four young creatures, a perfect galaxy of bright and beaming eyes. There was not a plain face among them; and I was struck with the circumstance of how rare it was to meet with a youthful and positively ugly American female. Kitty, too, was at the door by the time we reached the carriage, and she also was a blooming and attractive-looking girl. It was a thousand pities that she spoke, however; the vulgarity of her utterance, tone of voice, cadences, and accent, the latter a sort of singing whine, being in striking contrast to a sort of healthful and vigorous delicacy that marked her appearance. All the bright eyes grew brighter as I drew nearer, carrying the

flute in my hand; but neither of the young ladies spoke.

"Buy a vatch, ma'ams," said uncle Ro, approaching his mother, cap in hand, with his box open.

"I thank you, friend; but I believe all here are provided with watches already."

"Mine ist ferry sheaps."

"I dare say they may be," returned dear grandmother, smiling; "though cheap watches are not usually the best. Is that very pretty pencil gold?"

"Yes, ma'ams; it ist of *goot* gold. If it might not be, I might not say so."

I saw suppressed smiles among the girls; all of whom, however, were too well-bred to betray to common observers the sense of the ridiculous that each felt at the equivoque that suggested itself in my uncle's words.

"What is the price of this pencil?" asked my grandmother.

Uncle Roger had too much tact to think of inducing his mother to make a purchase as he had influenced Miller, and he mentioned something near the true value of the "article," which was fifteen dollars.

"I will take it," returned my grandmother,

dropping three half eagles into the box; when, turning to Mary Warren, she begged her acceptance of the pencil, with as much respect in her manner as if she solicited instead of conferred a favour.

Mary Warren's handsome face was covered with blushes; she looked pleased, and she accepted the offering, though I thought she hesitated one moment about the propriety of so doing, most probably on account of its value. My sister asked to look at this little present, and after admiring it, it passed from hand to hand, each praising its shape and ornaments. All my uncle's wares, indeed, were in perfect good taste, the purchase having been made of an importer of character, and paid for at some cost. The watches, it is true, were, with one or two exceptions, cheap, as were most of the trinkets; but my uncle had about his person a watch, or two, and some fine jewellery, that he had brought from Europe himself, expressly to bestow in presents, among which had been the pencil in question, and which he had dropped into the box but a moment before it was sold.

"Wa-a-l, Madam Littlepage," cried Miller, who used the familiarity of one born on the

estate, "this is the queerest watch-pedlar I've met with yet. He asks fifteen dollars for that pencil, and only four for this watch!" showing his own purchase as he concluded.

My grandmother took the watch in her hand, and examined it attentively.

"It strikes me as singularly cheap!" she remarked, glancing a little distrustfully, as I fancied, at her son, as if she thought he might be selling his brushes cheaper than those who only stole the materials, because he stole them ready made. "I know that these watches are made for very little in the cheap countries of Europe, but one can hardly see how this machinery was put together for so small a sum."

"I has 'em, matam, at all brices," put in my uncle.

"I have a strong desire to purchase a *good* lady's watch, but should a little fear buying of any but a known and regular dealer."

"You needn't fear us, ma'am," I ventured to say. "If we might sheat anypodies, we shouldn't sheat so goot a laty."

I do not know whether my voice struck Patt's ear pleasantly, or a wish to see the project of her grandmother carried out at once, induced my sister to interfere; but interfere she did,

and that by urging her aged parent to put confidence in us. Years had taught my grandmother caution, and she hesitated.

"But all these watches are of base metal, and I want one of good gold and handsome finish," observed my grandmother.

My uncle immediately produced a watch that he had bought of Blondel, in Paris, for five hundred francs, and which was a beautiful little ornament for a lady's belt. He gave it to my grandmother, who read the name of the manufacturer with some little surprise. The watch itself was then examined attentively, and was applauded by all.

"And what may be the price of this?" demanded my grandmother.

"One hoondred dollars, matam; and sheaps at dat."

Tom Miller looked at the bit of tinsel in his own hand, and at the smaller, but exquisitely-shaped "article" that my grandmother held up to look at, suspended by its bit of ribbon, and was quite as much puzzled as he had evidently been a little while before, in his distinctions between the rich and the poor. Tom was not able to distinguish the base from the true; that was all.

My grandmother did not appear at all alarmed at the price, though she cast another distrustful glance or two, over her spectacles, at the imaginary pedlar. At length the beauty of the watch overcame her.

"If you will bring this watch to yonder large dwelling, I will pay you the hundred dollars for it," she said; "I have not as much money with me here."

"Ja, ja—ferry goot; you might keep das vatch, laty, und I will coome for der money after I haf got some dinners of somebodys."

My grandmother had no scruple about accepting of the credit, of course, and she was about to put the watch in her pocket, when Patt laid her little gloved hand on it, and cried—

"Now, dearest grandmother, let it be done at once—there is no one but us three present, you know!"

"Such is the impatience of a child!" exclaimed the elder lady, laughing. "Well, you shall be indulged. I gave you that pencil for a keep-sake, Mary, only *en attendant*, it having been my intention to offer a watch, as soon as a suitable one could be found, as a memorial of the sense I entertain of the spirit you showed

during that dark week in which the anti-renters were so menacing. Here, then, is such a watch as I might presume to ask you to have the goodness to accept."

Mary Warren seemed astounded! The colour mounted to her temples; then she became suddenly pale. I had never seen so pretty a picture of gentle female distress—a distress that arose from conflicting, but creditable feelings.

"Oh! Mrs. Littlepage!" she exclaimed, after looking in astonishment at the offering for a moment, and in silence. "You cannot have intended that beautiful watch for me!"

"For you, my dear; the beautiful watch is not a whit too good for my beautiful Mary."

"But, dear, *dear* Mrs. Littlepage, it is altogether too handsome for my station—for my means."

"A lady can very well wear such a watch; and you are a lady in every sense of the word, and so you need have no scruples on that account. As for the means, you will not misunderstand me if I remind you that it will be bought with my means, and there can be no extravagance in the purchase."

"But we are so poor, and that watch has so rich an appearance! It scarcely seems right."

"I respect your feelings and sentiments, my

dear girl, and can appreciate them. I suppose you know I was once as poor, nay, much poorer than you are, yourself."

"You, Mrs. Littlepage! No, that can hardly be. You are of an affluent and very respectable family, I know."

"It is quite true, nevertheless, my dear. I shall not affect extreme humility, and deny that the Malbones did and do belong to the gentry of the land, but my brother and myself were once so much reduced as to toil with the surveyors, in the woods, quite near this property. We had then no claim superior to yours, and in many respects were reduced much lower. Besides, the daughter of an educated and well-connected clergyman has claims that, in a worldly point of view alone, entitle her to a certain consideration. You will do me the favour to accept my offering?"

"Dear Mrs. Littlepage! I do not know how to refuse *you*, or how to accept so rich a gift! You will let me consult my father, first?"

"That will be no more than proper, my dear," returned my beloved grandmother, quietly putting the watch into her own pocket; "Mr. Warren, luckily, dines with us, and the

matter can be settled before we sit down to table."

This ended the discussion, which had commenced under an impulse of feeling that left us all its auditors. As for my uncle and myself, it is scarcely necessary to say we were delighted with the little scene. The benevolent wish to gratify, on the one side, with the natural scruples on the other, about receiving, made a perfect picture for our contemplation. The three girls, who were witnesses of what passed, too much respected Mary's feelings to interfere, though Patt restrained herself with difficulty. As to Tom Miller and Kitty, they doubtless wondered why "Warren's gal" was such a fool as to hesitate about accepting a watch that was worth a hundred dollars. This was another point they did not understand.

"You spoke of dinner," continued my grandmother, looking at my uncle. "If you and your companion will follow us to the house, I will pay you for the watch, and order you a dinner in the bargain."

We were right down glad to accept this offer, making our bows and expressing our thanks, as the carriage whirled off. We remained a moment, to take our leave of Miller.

"When you've got through at the Nest," said that semi-worthy fellow, "give us another call here. I should like my woman and Kitty to have a look at your finery, before you go down to the village with it."

With a promise to return to the farm-house, we proceeded on our way to the building which, in the familiar parlance of the country, was called the Nest or the Nest House, from Ravensnest, its true name, and which Tom Miller, in his country dialect, called the "Neest." The distance between the two buildings was less than half a mile, the grounds of the family residence lying partly between them. Many persons would have called the extensive lawns which surrounded my paternal abode a park, but it never bore that name with us. They were too large for a paddock, and might very well have come under the former appellation; but, as deer, or animals of any sort, except those that are domestic, had never been kept within it, the name had not been used. We called them the grounds—a term which applies equally to large and small enclosures of this nature—while the broad expanse of verdure which lies directly under the windows goes by the name of the lawn. Notwithstanding the

cheapness of land among us, there has been very little progress made in the art of landscape gardening; and if we have any thing like park scenery, it is far more owing to the gifts of a bountiful nature than to any of the suggestions of art. Thanks to the cultivated taste of Downing, as well as to his well-directed labours, this reproach is likely to be soon removed, and country life will acquire this pleasure, among the many others that are so peculiarly its own. After lying for more than twenty years—a stigma on the national taste—disfigured by ravines or gullies, and otherwise in a rude and discreditable condition, the grounds of the White House have been brought into a condition to denote that they are the property of a civilized country. The Americans are as apt at imitation as the Chinese, with a far greater disposition to admit of change; and little beyond good models are required to set them on the right track. But it is certain that, as a nation, we have yet to acquire nearly all that belongs to the art I have mentioned that lies beyond avenues of trees, with an occasional tuft of shrubbery. The abundance of the latter, that forms the wilderness of sweets, the *masses* of flowers that spot

the surface of Europe, the beauty of curved lines, and the whole finesse of surprises, reliefs, back-grounds and vistas, are things so little known among us as to be almost "arisdogratic," as my uncle Ro would call the word.

Little else had been done at Ravensnest than to profit by the native growth of the trees, and to take advantage of the favourable circumstances in the formation of the grounds. Most travellers imagine that it might be an easy thing to lay out a park in the virgin forest, as the axe might spare the thickets, and copses, and woods, that elsewhere are the fruits of time and planting. This is all a mistake, however, as the rule; though modified exceptions may and do exist. The tree of the American forest shoots upward toward the light, growing so tall and slender as to be unsightly; and even when time has given its trunk a due size, the top is rarely of a breadth to ornament a park or a lawn, while its roots, seeking their nourishment in the rich alluvium formed by the decayed leaves of a thousand years, lie too near the surface to afford sufficient support after losing the shelter of its neighbours. It is owing to reasons like these that the ornamental grounds of an American country-house have usually to be com-

menced *ab origine*, and that natural causes so little aid in finishing them.

My predecessors had done a little towards assisting nature, at the Nest, and what was of almost equal importance, in the state of knowledge on this subject as it existed in the country sixty years since, they had done little to mar her efforts. The results were, that the grounds of Ravensnest possess a breadth that is the fruit of the breadth of our lands, and a rural beauty which, without being much aided by art, was still attractive. The herbage was kept short by sheep, of which one thousand, of the fine wool, were feeding on the lawns, along the slopes, and particularly on the distant heights, as we crossed the grounds on our way to the doors.

The Nest House was a respectable New York country dwelling, as such buildings were constructed among us in the last quarter of the past century, a little improved and enlarged by the second and third generations of its owners. The material was of stone, the low cliff on which it stood supplying enough of an excellent quality; and the shape of the main *corps de batiment* as near a square as might be. Each face of this part of the constructions offered five

windows to view, this being almost the prescribed number for a country residence in that day, as three have since got to be in towns. These windows, however, had some size, the main building being just sixty feet square, which was about ten feet in each direction larger than was common so soon after the revolution. But wings had been added to the original building, and that on a plan which conformed to the shape of a structure in square logs, that had been its predecessor on its immediate site. These wings were only of a story and a half each, and doubling on each side of the main edifice just far enough to form a sufficient communication, they ran back to the very verge of a cliff some forty feet in height, overlooking, at their respective ends, a meandering rivulet, and a wide expanse of very productive flats, that annually filled my barns with hay and my cribs with corn. Of this level and fertile bottom-land there was near a thousand acres, stretching in three directions, of which two hundred belonged to what was called the Nest Farm. The remainder was divided among the farms of the adjacent tenantry. This little circumstance, among the thousand and one other atrocities that were charged upon me, had been

made a ground of accusation, to which I shall presently have occasion to advert. I shall do this the more readily, because the fact has not yet reached the ears and set in motion the tongues of legislators—Heaven bless us, how words do get corrupted by too much use!—in their enumeration of the griefs of the tenants of the State.

Everything about the Nest was kept in perfect order, and in a condition to do credit to the energy and taste of my grandmother, who had ordered all these things for the last few years, or since the death of my grandfather. This circumstance, connected with the fact that the building was larger and more costly than those of most of the other citizens of the country, had, of late years, caused Ravensnest to be termed an "aristocratic residence." This word "aristocratic," I find since my return home, has got to be a term of expansive signification, its meaning depending on the particular habits and opinions of the person who happens to use it. Thus, he who chews tobacco thinks it aristocratic in him who deems the practice nasty not to do the same; the man who stoops accuses him who is straight in the back of having aristocratic shoulders; and I have actually met

with one individual who maintained that it was excessively aristocratic to pretend not to blow one's nose with his fingers. It will soon be aristocratic to maintain the truth of the familiar Latin axiom of "*de gustibus non disputandum est.*"

As we approached the door of the Nest House, which opened on the piazza that stretched along three sides of the main building, and the outer ends of both wings, the coachman was walking his horses away from it, on the road that led to the stables. The party of ladies had made a considerable circuit after quitting the farm, and had arrived but a minute before us. All the girls but Mary Warren had entered the house, careless on the subject of the approach of two pedlars; she remained, however, at the side of my grandmother, to receive us.

"I believe in my soul," whispered uncle Ro, "that my dear old mother has a secret presentiment who we are, by her manifesting so much respect. — T'ousand t'anks, matam, t'ousand t'anks," he continued, dropping into his half-accurate, half-blundering, broken English, "for dis great honour, such as we might not expect das laty of das house to wait for us at her door."

"This young lady tells me that she has seen

you before, and that she understands you are both persons of education and good manners, who have been driven from your native country by political troubles. Such being the case, I cannot regard you as common pedlars. I have known what it was to be reduced in fortune,"— my dear grandmother's voice trembled a little— "and can feel for those who thus suffer."

"Matam, dere might be moch trut' in some of dis," answered my uncle, taking off his cap, and bowing very much like a gentleman, an act in which I imitated him immediately. "We *haf* seen petter tays; und my son, dere, hast peen eticatet at an university. But we are now poor pedlars of vatches, und dem dat might make moosic in der streets."

My grandmother looked as a lady would look under such circumstances, neither too free to forget present appearances, nor coldly neglectful of the past. She knew that something was due to her own household, and to the example she ought to set it, while she felt that far more was due to the sentiment that unites the cultivated. We were asked into the house, were told a table was preparing for us, and were treated with a generous and considerate hospitality that involved no descent from her

own character, or that of the sex; the last being committed to the keeping of every lady.

In the mean time, business proceeded with my uncle. He was paid his hundred dollars; and all his stores of value, including rings, brooches, ear-rings, chains, bracelets, and other trinkets that he had intended as presents to his wards, were produced from his pockets, and laid before the bright eyes of the three girls—Mary Warren keeping in the back ground, as one who ought not to look on things unsuited to her fortune. Her father had arrived, however, had been consulted, and the pretty watch was already attached to the girdle of the prettier waist. I fancied the tear of gratitude that still floated in her serene eyes was a jewel of far higher price than any my uncle could exhibit.

We had been shown into the library, a room that was in the front of the house, and of which the windows all opened on the piazza. I was at first a little overcome, at thus finding myself, and unrecognized, under the paternal roof, and in a dwelling that was my own, after so many years of absence. Shall I confess it! Everything appeared diminutive and mean, after the buildings to which I had been accustomed in the old world. I am not now drawing com-

parisons with the palaces of princes, and the abodes of the great, as the American is apt to fancy, whenever anything is named that is superior to the things to which he is accustomed; but to the style, dwellings, and appliances of domestic life that pertain to those of other countries who have not a claim in anything to be accounted my superiors—scarcely my equals. In a word, American aristocracy, or that which it is getting to be the fashion to stigmatize as aristocratic, would be deemed very democratic in most of the nations of Europe. Our Swiss brethren have their chateaux and their habits that are a hundred times more aristocratic than anything about Ravensnest, without giving offence to liberty; and I feel persuaded, were the proudest establishment in all America pointed out to a European as an aristocratic abode, he would be very apt to laugh at it, in his sleeve. The secret of this charge among ourselves is the innate dislike which is growing up in the country to see any man distinguished from the mass around him in anything, even though it should be in merit. It is nothing but the expansion of the principle which gave rise to the traditionary feud between the "plebeians and patricians" of Albany, at the com-

mencement of this century, and which has now descended so much farther than was then contemplated by the *soi-disant* "plebeians" of that day, as to become quite disagreeable to their own descendants. But to return to myself—

I will own that, so far from finding any grounds of exultation in my own aristocratical splendour, when I came to view my possessions at home, I felt mortified and disappointed. The things that I had fancied really respectable, and even fine, from recollection, now appeared very common-place, and in many particulars mean. "Really," I found myself saying *sotto voce*, "all this is scarcely worthy of being the cause of deserting the right, setting sound principles at defiance, and of forgetting God and his commandments!" Perhaps I was too inexperienced to comprehend how capacious is the maw of the covetous man, and how microscopic the eye of envy.

"You are welcome to Ravensnest," said Mr. Warren, approaching and offering his hand in a friendly way, much as he would address any other young friend; "we arrived a little before you, and I have had my ears and eyes open ever since, in the hope of hearing your flute, and of seeing your form in the highway, near

the parsonage, where you promised to visit me."

Mary was standing at her father's elbow, as when I first saw her, and she gazed wistfully at my flute, as she would not have done had she seen me in my proper attire, assuming my proper character.

"I danks you, sir," was my answer. "We might haf plenty of times for a little moosic, vhen das laties shall be pleaset to say so. I canst blay Yankee Doodle, Hail Coloombias, and der 'Star Spangled Banner,' and all dem airs, as dey so moch likes at der taverns and on der road."

Mr. Warren laughed, and he took the flute from my hand, and began to examine it. I now trembled for the incognito! The instrument had been mine for many years, and was a very capital one, with silver keys, stops, and ornaments. What if Patt—what if my dear grandmother should recognise it! I would have given the handsomest trinket in my uncle's collection to get the flute back again into my own hands; but, before an opportunity offered for that, it went from hand to hand, as the instrument that had produced the charming sounds heard that morning, until it reached those of

Martha. The dear girl was thinking of the jewellery, which, it will be remembered, was rich, and intended in part for herself, and she passed the instrument on, saying, hurriedly,—

"See, dear grandmother, this is the flute which you pronounced the sweetest toned of any you have ever heard!"

My grandmother took the flute, started, put her spectacles closer to her eyes, examined the instrument, turned pale—for her cheeks still retained a little of the colour of their youth—and then cast a glance hurriedly and anxiously at me. I could see that she was pondering on something profoundly in her most secret mind, for a minute or two. Luckily the others were too much occupied with the box of the pedlar to heed her movements. She walked slowly out of the door, almost brushing me as she passed, and went into the hall. Here she turned, and, catching my eye, she signed for me to join her. Obeying this signal, I followed, until I was led into a little room, in one of the wings, that I well remembered as a sort of private parlour attached to my grandmother's own bed-room. To call it a *boudoir* would be to caricature things, its furniture being just that of the sort of room I have mentioned, or of a

plain, neat, comfortable, country parlour. Here my grandmother took her seat on a sofa, for she trembled so she could not stand, and then she turned to gaze at me wistfully, and with an anxiety it would be difficult for me to describe.

"Do not keep me in suspense!" she said, almost awfully in tone and manner, "am I right in my conjecture?"

"Dearest grandmother, you are!" I answered, in my natural voice.

No more was needed: we hung on each other's necks, as had been my wont in boyhood.

"But who is that pedlar, Hugh?" demanded my grandmother, after a time. "Can it possibly be Roger, my son?"

"It is no other; we have come to visit you incog."

"And why this disguise?—Is it connected with the troubles?"

"Certainly; we have wished to take a near view with our own eyes, and supposed it might be unwise to come openly, in our proper characters."

"In this you have done well; yet I hardly know how to welcome you, in your present

characters. On no account must your real names be revealed. The demons of tar and feathers, the sons of liberty and equality, who illustrate their principles as they do their courage, by attacking the few with the many, would be stirring, fancying themselves heroes and martyrs in the cause of justice, did they learn you were here. Ten armed and resolute men might drive a hundred of them, I do believe; for they have all the cowardice of thieves, but they are heroes with the unarmed and feeble. Are you safe, yourselves, appearing thus disguised, under the new law?"

"We are not armed, not having so much as a pistol; and that will protect us."

"I am sorry to say, Hugh, that this country is no longer what I once knew it. Its justice, if not wholly departed, is taking to itself wings, and its blindness, not in a disregard of persons, but in a faculty of seeing only the stronger side. A landlord, in my opinion, would have but little hope, with jury, judge, or executive, for doing that which thousands of the tenants have done, still do, and will continue to do, with perfect impunity, unless some dire catastrophe stimulates the public functionaries to do their duties, by awakening public indignation."

"This is a miserable state of things, dearest grandmother; and what makes it worse, is the cool indifference with which most persons regard it. A better illustration of the utter selfishness of human nature cannot be given, than in the manner in which the body of the people look on, and see wrong thus done to a few of their number."

"Such persons as Mr. Seneca Newcome would answer, that the public sympathises with the poor, who are oppressed by the rich, because the last do not wish to let the first rob them of their estates! We hear a great deal of the strong robbing the weak, all over the world, but few among ourselves, I am afraid, are sufficiently clear-sighted to see how vivid an instance of the truth now exists among ourselves."

"Calling the tenants the strong, and the landlords the weak?"

"Certainly; numbers make strength in this country, in which all power in practice, and most of it in theory, rests with the majority. Were there as many landlords as there are tenants, my life on it no one would see the least injustice in the present state of things."

"So says my uncle: but I hear the light steps of the girls—we must be on our guard."

At that instant Martha entered, followed by all three of the girls, holding in her hand a very beautiful Manilla chain that my uncle had picked up in his travels, and had purchased as a present to my future wife, whomsoever she might turn out to be, and which he had had the indiscretion to show to his ward. A look of surprise was cast by each girl in succession, as she entered the room, on me, but neither said, and I fancy neither thought much of my being shut up there with an old lady of eighty, after the first moment. Other thoughts were uppermost at that moment.

"Look at this, dearest grandmamma!" cried Patt, holding up the chain as she entered the room. "Here is just the most exquisite chain that was ever wrought, and of the purest gold; but the pedlar refuses to part with it!"

"Perhaps you do not offer enough, my child; it is, indeed, very, very beautiful; pray what does he say is its value?"

"One hundred dollars, he says; and I can readily believe it, for its weight is near half the money. I do wish Hugh were at home; I am certain he would contrive to get it, and make it a present to me!"

"Nein, nein, young lady," put in the pedlar,

who, a little unceremoniously, had followed the girls into the room, though he knew, of course, precisely where he was coming; "dat might not be. Dat chain is der broperty of my son, t'ere, und I haf sworn it shalt only be given to his wife."

Patt coloured a little, and she pouted a good deal; then she laughed outright.

"If it is only to be had on those conditions, I am afraid I shall never own it," she said, saucily, though it was intended to be uttered so low as not to reach my ears. "I will pay the hundred dollars out of my own pocket-money, however, if that will buy it. Do say a good word for me, grandmamma!"

How prettily the hussy uttered that word of endearment, so different from the "paw" and "maw" one hears among the dirty-noses that are to be found in the mud-puddles? But our grand-parent was puzzled, for she knew with whom she had to deal, and of course saw that money would do nothing. Nevertheless, the state of the game rendered it necessary to say and do something that might have an appearance of complying with Patty's request.

"Can I have more success in persuading you to change your mind, sir?" she said, looking at

her son in a way that let him know at once, or at least made him suspect at once, that she was in his secret. "It would give me great pleasure to be able to gratify my grand-daughter, by making her a present of so beautiful a chain."

My uncle Ro advanced to his mother, took the hand she had extended with the chain in it, in order the better to admire the trinket, and he kissed it with a profound respect, but in such a manner as to make it seem to the lookers-on an act of European usage, rather than what it was, the tempered salute of a child to his parent.

"Laty," he then said, with emphasis, "if anyboty might make me change a resolution long since made, it would be one as fenerable, und gracious, und goot as I am sartain you most be. But I haf vowet to gif dat chain to das wife of mine son, vhen he might marry, one day, some bretty young American; und it might not be."

Dear grandmother smiled; but now she understood that it was really intended the chain was to be an offering to my wife, she no longer wished to change its destination. She examined the bauble a few moments, and said to me—

"Do you wish this, as well as your un—father, I should say? It is a rich present for a poor man to make."

"Ja, ja, laty, it ist so; but vhen der heart goes, golt might be t'ought sheap to go wid it."

The old lady was half ready to laugh in my face, at hearing this attempt at Germanic English; but the kindness, and delight, and benevolent tenderness of her still fine eyes, made me wish to throw myself in her arms again, and kiss her. Pat continued to *bouder* for a moment or two longer, but her excellent nature soon gave in, and the smiles returned to her countenance, as the sun issues from behind a cloud in May.

"Well, the disappointment may and must be borne," she said, good-naturedly; "though it is much the most lovely chain I have ever seen."

"I dare say the right person will one day find one quite as lovely to present to you!" said Henrietta Coldbrook, a little pointedly.

I did not like this speech. It was an allusion that a well-bred young woman ought not to have made, at least before others, even pedlars; and it was one that a young woman of a proper tone of feeling would not be apt to make. I determined from that instant the chain should never belong to Miss Henrietta, though she was a fine showy girl, and though such a decision would disappoint my uncle sadly. I was a little sur-

prised to see a slight blush on Patt's cheek, and then I remembered something of the name of the traveller, Beckman. Turning towards Mary Warren, I saw plain enough that she was disappointed, because my sister was disappointed, and for no other reason in the world.

"Your grandmother will meet with another chain, when she goes to town, that will make you forget this," she whispered, affectionately, close at my sister's ear.

Patt smiled, and kissed her friend with a warmth of manner that satisfied me these two charming young creatures loved each other sincerely. But my dear old grandmother's curiosity had been awakened, and she felt a necessity for having it appeased. She still held the chain, and as she returned it to me, who happened to be nearest to her, she said—

"And so, sir, your mind is sincerely made up to offer this chain to your future wife?"

"Yes, laty; or what might be better, to das yoong frau, before we might be marriet."

"And is your choice made?" glancing round at the girls, who were grouped together, looking at some other trinkets of my uncle's. "Have you chosen the young woman who is to possess so handsome a chain?"

"Nein, nein," I answered, returning the smile, and glancing also at the group; "dere ist so many peautiful laties in America, one needn't be in a hurry. In goot time I shalt find her dat ist intended for me."

"Well, grandmamma," interrupted Patt, "since nobody can have the chain, unless on certain conditions, here are the three other things that we have chosen for Ann, Henrietta, and myself, and they are a ring, a pair of bracelets, and a pair of ear-rings. The cost, altogether, will be two hundred dollars; can you approve of that?"

My grandmother, now she knew who was the pedlar, understood the whole matter, and had no scruples. The bargain was soon made, when she sent us all out of the room, under the pretence we should disturb her while settling with the watch-seller. Her real object, however, was to be alone with her son, not a dollar passing between them, of course.

END OF VOL. I.

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